We Believe in Prayer

Edited by

SYDNEY STRONG

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We believe in prayer

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We Believe in Prayer

AFFIRMATIONS BY ONE HUNDRED MEN AND WOMEN OF MANY LANDS

Edited by

SYDNEY STRONG

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DEDICATION

To the millions upon millions of souls, who, in all ages, not content with what their eyes could see and hands touch, have sought God, if haply they might find him—pioneers of faith, leaders of mankind's upward march in light and liberty.

We give them praise.

To the millions upon millions, who, in the future, will carry on the torch of eternal light in new adventures and discoveries of the beauty and power of God, who make the road men travel—pioneers of faith, leaders of mankind's upward march in light and liberty.

We give them cheers.

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PREFACE

This is an important book, expressing the deepest thoughts of a hundred trained minds in many nations, on a vital problem. It contains an amazing variety of human experience in one of the most universal and important phenomena of life—Prayer.

It is a timely book, for while the theme belongs to the centuries, men of today are readjusting their thinking and practises to such universal phenomena as prayer. The passing generation has majored in sociology. Today, attention is turning to psychology and theology.

"It is most fitting" writes Dr. James L. Barton, Boston, "that in this material age attention be called to the place of prayer in human life." The presence and power of paganism are leading men of science like Professors Commons and Eddington to point out the fact and influence of spiritual forces in the universe.

The reader of this book on prayer will find abundant evidence that prayer is the path to

peace and success; that prayer is the root from which invention and creation most abundantly proceed.

The statements stand as they came from the writer, except for a few revisions in the interests of space. The editor sends the book on its way, knowing that "in prayer inspired by faith" as Professor James Moffatt has said, "something not of man is contriving, and millions living today, not altogether fools, are living in this faith."

S. S.

January 1, 1930.

WE BELIEVE IN PRAYER

A PRAYER

By Edwin Markham

TEACH me, Father, how to go
Softly as the grasses grow;
Hush my soul to meet the shock
Of the wild world as a rock;
But my spirit propt with power,
Make as simple as a flower.
Let the dry heart fill its cup.
Like a poppy looking up;
Let life lightly wear her crown,
Like a poppy looking down.

Teach me, Father, how to be
Kind and patient as a tree.
Joyfully the crickets croon
Under shady oak at noon;
Beetle on his mission bent,
Tarries in that cooling tent.
Let me also cheer a nook—
Place for friendly bread and book—
Place where passing souls can rest
On the way, and be their best.

We Believe In Prayer

S. Abe

Japan

I BELIEVE in prayer. It is the communication with God. It is to give myself to God as well as He gives Himself. Prayer makes my heart quiet and strengthens the spirit which also gives the physical power. I believe that He hears my asking when I pray with all my heart; but rather prefer to find out His will. The Gethsemane must be the example of true prayer. I believe in public prayer provided that the whole congregation should be consecrated into one mind. The leading spirit of Jesus ought to be remembered especially in public prayer, which is the only resource for the bringing of the Kingdom of God in this world.

PRAYER FOR BROTHERHOOD

PETER AINSLIE

Baltimore

O LORD, we give ourselves to Thee and ask that Thou wouldst make us organs of Thy Spirit in gentleness, patience, and good-will. Open our eyes that we may see that Thou hast made us to be brothers one to another, and awaken within us alarm when we do violence to brotherhood by ugly attitudes and unbrotherly conduct. Guide us in the revaluation of the things of others and, at the same time, in the revaluation of our own things, in order that we may find a fair appreciation of those things that are appreciated. Help us to know that we cannot attain happiness when others are unhappy, nor brotherly love so long as Thy church is torn by strife. Lead us into a united Christendom. Purge us of vainglorying, bigotry, false witness-bearing, and ugliness of spirit. Bestow upon us honesty for our pretence, strength for our weakness, courage for our fear, faith for our wavering, and love for our indifference and suspicion. Thou art alive and the goodness of the world is the pulse beat of Thy life. Live Thou in us until every wrong shall be ashamed, and show us how to find satisfaction at Thy feet when we hear Thy word.—Amen.

We Believe In Prayer

ARN S. ALLEN

Seattle

HERE is a strange fact. I have prayed daily for more than thirty years and never yet have analyzed "my prayers" or "my prayer life." It simply never occurred to me to do so. When it did occur to me I momentarily had a feeling of humiliation. Had I negelected something vital in one of my most real experiences? This feeling of humiliation was quickly followed by one of exaltation!

Come to think about it, I had never analyzed my sainted mother's love. The fact of it is just one of those priceless possessions to the value of which no, to me conceivable, analysis could add a whit.

For forty-one years—save three times of two days each—I have known the time of day by means of the same watch. And it has never occurred to me to take this watch to pieces in order to reassure myself that it was functioning. Taking watches apart and getting them together again is the work of experts. Know-

ing the time of day by the reading of the dial of a reliable watch is a simple act done every day by nearly every normal adult civilized person.

All analogies have their limitations. I know that. And some one may say to me, "But you are not a watch and should your prayer life get out of order there is no repair man to whom you could go."

Well, I have not found it so. There have been days—not many, I'm glad to be able to say—when the heavens seemed as solid brass; but on those occasions I recalled the "sign" of a Master in the fine art of living which reads: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." His "rest cure" has never failed to repair the broken relationship.

The above is not a syllogism *on* prayer but a statement of experience *with* prayer.

We Believe In Prayer

JOHN M. ATWOOD
St. Lawrence University

PRAYER is a method that man has developed in his religious life to help him to find God. Its value is in the fact that it has been effectual to this end. The great truth is that thru prayer he comes into contact with the Power that empowers, uplifts and comforts. So that whereas he was weak, or irresolute, or disquieted, he is now by this great means strong, or determined or calm. That is its justification.

In the days of superstition and more limited unscientific knowledge, man inevitably associated with prayer many false ideas. It was conceived as a way—hardly distinguishable from magic—by which he could influence God and use Him for his own ends. The efficacy of prayer from this view was in the supposed ability of the petitioner to get desired results from God. As man has progressed these ideas have been dropped, tho some, and not simply those uneducated, still persist in cherishing

them. Most stories of answers to prayer cite as evidence such instances as the familiar one of Muller of Bristol. It shows how they miss its profound significance.

Prayer is a spiritual act and its blessings are spiritual. As Augustine said, "The reward of God is Himself"—not houses or land or barrels of flour or suits of clothes. Indeed what people need in every emergency and are ever unconsciously seeking, is just that to which sincere, unselfish prayer brings them—GOD. It does not avail to swerve the bullet of a soldier's gun a hair's breadth, but it can make the anxious and troubled man know the very Spirit of Love and Justice, and so go bravely on his way in rational trust and peace.

We never rise higher than the spirit of our prayer. If we pray for just our own family, or sect or country, we know only a narrow provincial God; but if our heart and thought go out for justice for men of every race and class, lo, we have found the Universal Father whose thought and love encircle the world.

We Believe In Prayer

ROGER W. BABSON

Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts

I KNOW that, owing to our being free agents, it is necessary for us to relax and meditate often. Only by such meditating is it possible for us to keep in harmony with this Divine Force and hence benefit therefrom. The need of such meditation developed the custom of prayer; and the benefit referred to is commonly known as spiritual power.

Notwithstanding the needless superstitions which have crept into theology, the science of spiritual things, to ignore this spiritual power is pure ignorance. Hence, men pray and prayer has always been a source of great power. We, however, should pray that our efforts shall synchronize with natural laws rather than oppose them.

Prayer is something more than psychological. Prayer is putting oneself in a position where he receives divine spiritual power. In other words, although I believe in scientific

prayer, yet I believe that Prayer brings power from the outside as well as generates power within one's soul.

CLEMENT M. BIDDLE

New York

PRAYER is indispensable in our daily lives in striving to discover the purpose of the universe and in our desire to live in accordance with that purpose.

Without God man cannot develop his full strength. Most of the lasting accomplishments of the world have been achieved by men who have taken God into partnership and have received inspiration and strength thru prayer and meditation. When one's mind and heart and soul are in tune with his Creator, He is found everywhere. When one feels the enrichment of the sense of God within there is an inner light—a still, small voice—that distinguishes right from wrong, that clarifies the

way and that equips us to meet the needs of humanity.

In our efforts to learn the value of prayer, we are aided by reading the Bible and other religious works and we are substantially strengthened by association with our contemporaries in public worship even though but two or three are gathered together in His name.

LEONARD V. BIGGS

The Melbourne Age

IF ONE accepts the idea that life has, in the final analysis, a spiritual basis and is prepared to predicate God, the soul, and some sort of immortality for which the present life is a preparation, the question of prayer becomes a matter of profound personal importance. I cannot accept the hypothesis that blind, materialistic force is behind everything. I predicate a God who is at least as just, sympathetic and helpful to countless millions as I try to be

to those whose lives I touch daily. I therefore believe in prayer as the attempt on the part of human beings to commune with and communicate to this God of my noblest dreamings.

I find in the almost frightening sweep of the new knowledge nothing to forbid my spirit rising in supplication, adoration and confession to the God I worship. But I do find in it much to guide me concerning what I can honestly and sincerely pray to Him. I cannot opportune Him to set aside laws upon whose fixity or general reliability the security of millions depend. But I can open my soul to Him when my spirit faints or the stress of this world's pressure becomes almost insupportable. I can bow my head and breathe "Amen" as some noble liturgy interprets the aspirations of thousands of worshippers, whether in vaulted cathedral, or in humble hall in the Australian countryside. I find nought in scientific modernism or in Anglo-Catholicism to forbid, or render intellectually or spiritually inconsistent, such an attitude of mind as accepts both ancient

liturgy and inspirational prayer as having a place in the practical religion of the World of 1930. Corporate, printed prayer enshrining the piety and passion of generations is as necessary to me and millions like me as the halting, half-muttered and trembling cries of the private individuals, that daily send out S. O. S. signals to an Eternal God who intended the soul of man to be free.

I believe in Prayer because I believe that without it Faith must die and man must be content with a destiny lower than that of the brute creation. It is aspiration put in words: it is release from the tyranny of flesh and circumstance.

M. R. BISMAS

Calcutta, India

Why Do I Believe in Prayer?

1. Every child of God has a FAITH. Faith comes from God above; it is eternal, indestructible. To strengthen my Faith, I need

to be near God always. He is the constant source of life, joy, peace and happiness to me. He never faileth even when I leave Him. He stands at the door of my *Conscience* and knocks—His mercy and patience endure for me and for ever.

2. His presence in me which I get only through Prayer is unspeakable. I may forget the prayer which I offered to Him in time of my distress, need and even in my ecstasy of Joy; but He is true to His hearing and when the response comes in my life unawarely and silently, and when I feel how loving His nature is to me and how mindful He is even to an insignificant creature like me in this great vast universe of His—my joys know no bound and the words of gratitude from my heart run on to His Gracious throne spontaneously—and this I do thru PRAYER.

The friends may forget me and even my dear and near ones may leave me but I feel His presence, nearness always in me, even in the days of turmoil and loneliness; and this I can only realize thru Prayer.

3. Prayer changes the entire course of life, wonderfully. It makes a man feel his utter unworthiness, and the more a person feels that, the higher he climbs the ladder of peace.

Dan F. Bradley

Cleveland, Ohio

IF "there is a Divinity which shapes our ends," it is important to keep in touch with Him. If "in Him we live and move and have our being," then we certainly ought to get acquainted with our most intimate environment. Prayer is to my mind the most sensible way of keeping in touch with God. Prayer offers me the opportunity of communicating with my most intimate neighbor, who is God. And prayer is a constant reminder to me of the "Divinity who shapes our ends," and of the near and powerful neighbor "with whom I live and move and have my being." I do not pray to get things done. I do not pray to ask

favors. God does everything so well that He needs no instruction from me. And God gives me so much I am ashamed to ask for more. But I want God to know that I like Him, and I want Him to know that I am concerned, as He is, in people, and events, and reforms. So I pray about all these things. I broadcast to Him my desires, and affections, and am perfectly sure that He likes to hear me pray, just as I like to hear the prattle of my little grand-daughter, and will do the very best thing for me anyway, and for all my brothers and sisters the world around. I like God and His ways so well, that I would be ashamed not to tell Him about it. So I pray.

PRAYER

DWIGHT BRADLEY

Newton Centre, Mass.

OUR dreams, O God, are thy realities,
And our realities, O God, thy Dream;

We Believe In Prayer

What to our thinking are finalities,
To thee are phrases of the cosmic Theme.
We hear faint echoes of an uncompleted song;
Thou knowest the harmonies that to the Whole belong.

We yearn for Truth, yet to illusions cling;
Thou art the Truth for which we lamely seek.
We picture in our thought a better thing;
Thou art the Best of which we only speak.
The transient gusts of mood from which we fain would flee
In one vast calm of Peace are gathered up in Thee.

We hear the plashing waves that wash the shore,
Where on a narrow littoral we stand;
Thou art the mighty throbbing and the roar
Of oceanic billows, far from land.
We count the random drops caught in a shallow pool;
Thou art the flood that fills the ocean full.

Give us, O God, to dream until our dream
Becomes at last thy great Reality.
Give us to hear thy music, till its theme
Comes to our ears a finished symphony;
Into our shallow pool thy infinite ocean pour
Until thy Boundlessness has swallowed up our shore.

We Believe In Prayer

JOHN BRAILSFORD

New Zealand

THE aim of life, according to Trine's beautiful book, is to be "in tune with the infinite." Whether you and I are in tune or not, I take it, we are all members of the eternal choir. There are some schools where one may hear children sing beautifully—but not all the children; those who have not a natural talent for music are excluded. All adult choirs and orchestras in the same way seek to attain perfection by exclusion of the inept. But in the choir of the infinite harmony, it seems to me, child-souls making their first feeble efforts are as welcome as the greatest singers.

Sometimes as we take our part in this choir and listen to the harmony that grows ever wider and more glorious, you and I become conscious of something amiss. We come to know that our notes are at fault. If we ignore the fault, it becomes worse and worse. We find ourselves attempting to sing in two choirs at one time—in the choir of self-assertion or

group-dominance as well as the choir of the infinite harmony. The discord clashes hideously, but we tend to go on. We may even deceive ourselves into imagining that our little group—our party, our church, our nation, our class, our intellectual coterie, our business, or our own lonely self—can so swell its sound as to overwhelm and take the place of the Divine harmony. This way lies tragedy. Sooner or later we have to come back to reality. The "still small voice" calls to us. Listening to it, we hear again the true harmony, always perfect, always widening in its grandeur, always keeping a place for you and me.

But it is not only in the pauses that we listen and try to attune ourselves. When we are singing at full voice, then, too, we listen. Tennyson has written of "a life that leads melodious days"—the life of one whose "hands are quick unto good." Whittier's words, "each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer" are true, are they not? "To work is to pray" (*Laborare est orare*), the monks of old used to say. We all know people of humble, constant service

who, if they do pray consciously, never inform us, but in the true sense they never cease praying. But most of us, I think, have need of the pauses in order that, listening in the stillness, we may know the theme, rise to its grandeur and thrill as we burst into song again in our true part.

CHARLES R. BROWN

Dean, Emeritus, Yale Divinity School

Does Prayer Change Any Thing?

IT CHANGES me. The personal reactions which take place when one prays habitually in simple, straightforward, earnest fashion, are too manifest to be questioned. Does anything ever change a man's inner life and disposition so rapidly, so thoroughly, so permanently as the habit of prayer?

It changes the atmosphere of a home in such a way as to affect the lives of the entire family

when the members of that family meet daily and kneel before their Maker in prayer for help and guidance to live aright. It changes the atmosphere of a community where places and habits of prayer are maintained. It changes the atmosphere of a college where those values in life which are supreme and lasting are exalted by the maintenance of services of prayer.

It opens doors into that Unseen Order which enfolds us all, making possible the direct approach and ministry of the Spirit of the Father, from whom the family in heaven and on earth is named, in a way and with an efficacy which would have been out of the question had the objects of His interest been prayerless. The boy who never speaks to his father cuts himself off from benefits innumerable, and he blocks the way against his father's gracious purpose.

My own deepest instincts, when my mind is clearest and my heart purest, the experiences of praying people in all lands and ages, and

the testimony and practice of Jesus Christ, all come in to confirm the claims that I make for prayer.

HUGH ELMER BROWN

Evanston, Illinois

RALPH WALDO EMERSON, when he preached his first sermon on Prayer, divided it into three parts, which he says he learned from an old Methodist minister—1. "Everybody prays. 2. Everybody gets what he prays for. 3. Look out what you pray for."

It would be hard to improve upon this crisp account of Prayer. It is full of good psychology and good Religion. It states facts.

We believe in Prayer because we pray. There is no deeper reason for Prayer. Instinct is deeper than intellect. We first exercise our powers and then we try to explain them. All men have the instinct to pray. Prayer is the unconquerable habit of the soul.

There can be no instinct which does not serve some purpose, and none which has not some answer in the scheme of things. It is the man who imagines that he has really and entirely ceased to pray who ought to be giving reasons for discontinuing so universal a practice.

What Carlyle calls "the deepest natural impulse of the soul" is here to stay. You may toss Prayer to the rubbish-pile of worn-out dogmas but it will come back. You may relegate Prayer to the museum of theological antiquities, but it will come back. You may reduce Prayer to wheels and beads but it will rise again to its natural purity. Prayer does and may run into all sorts of vagaries and distortions, sink into gross superstitions, suffocate within the heavy folds of ritual, but it has perennial power of survival and cannot be permanently obliterated from the human breast. Man is something more than the progeny of primeval mist. His soul cries "Abba Father." He bows before the Unseen in conscious dependence. He rises on the wings of aspiration to vaster worlds. "The reason we pray is that

we cannot help it" said Professor William James.

Prayer at its best is personal influence at its highest. Prayer in its upper ranges is far removed from magic or clamorous beggary. It is the organization, selection, and discipline of desire in the light of the best consciousness of God we can attain unto and the earnest endeavor thru that desire to educate ourselves in friendship with God and man.

WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN

Union Theological Seminary

BY PRAYER is meant those activities, experiences, and habits through which we make explicit to consciousness, and so a determining factor in our conduct, the relationship in which we stand to God all the time.

Four things prayer can do for us, any one of which would justify the central place which

has been given to it in the religious life of the past: It can open our eyes to the beauty and wonder of the world in which we live. It can introduce us into a fellowship more intimate and satisfying than any human friendship. It can furnish us with supplies of energy which will reinforce our limited powers and make us adequate to meet whatever strain the day may bring. It can keep us true to our best selves, by holding ever before our eyes the man or woman we were meant to be. These effects correspond to four aspects of the life of prayer which are often confused, but which we shall find it helpful to distinguish.

In the first place, prayer is appreciation. It puts us in the mood where we perceive the beauty and wonder of the world in which we are living, and yield ourselves up to their contemplation in reverence and thanksgiving. To pray is to realize what it may mean for our life, and for the life of the world, that there is such a God as Jesus called Father, and to find the whole world transfigured through the joy of the discovery.

In the next place, prayer is fellowship. In prayer we not only contemplate God; we speak to Him and He answers us. The beauty that thrills us, the ever-changing life by which we are surrounded, are but the garment in which the Eternal has clothed Himself that He may make His presence manifest to the finite children who could not bear to see Him face to face.

Again, prayer is creativity. It is not only communion, but renewal; not only intercourse, but recreation. We come to God in our weakness to be made strong; in our ignorance to be made wise; in our sickness to be made well; in our sorrow to be made happy; in our sin to be made righteous; and what we need we receive, if only we come in the right spirit and dare to believe that we may have the thing for which we ask.

Finally, prayer is discipline. It is the school in which we fit ourselves for service by the practice of the presence of God. All turns here on the word practice. There is something for us to do as well as to receive. Prayer is

not only the altar where we ask God for what we need. It is the judgment-seat to which we bring what we have made out of what He has given us, that He may test it by his own divine ideal. In the school of prayer we discover our shortcomings, and in renewed consecration rededicate ourselves to the cause of Christ.

CHARLES EMERSON BURTON

New York

I BELIEVE in conversation—it is good to talk with friends. The bigger and the better the friends the finer the conversation. God is the friend *par excellence.* He speaks to me as I associate myself with Him in his physical expression through nature, in His social expression through His creatures, and most of all through His psychic or spiritual contacts in my own inner life, for in Him I literally live and move and have my whole being. Answering His word I speak to him in the reverence,

awe and admiration I feel in His presence in this mighty yet intimate universe of which I am a part, in thinking over with Him His own thoughts in my converse with his children, and most intimately in the inner motions of my own being pulsing in answering gratitude, desire and worship.

As I contemplate the throbbing life in this orderly cosmos, coming to its flower and fruit in the thinking, feeling and willing of men I am conscious of its fulness of life, thought, purpose and love in contact with myself—a personal friend to whose thought and affection I respond with answering mind and heart. That to me is the heart of prayer whichever of the myriad forms of expression it may take.

RAYMOND CALKINS

Cambridge, Massachusetts

I BELIEVE in prayer because I believe it to be a native, inalienable impulse of the soul.

Prayer is the escape of the soul to God. It is an impulse which may be ignored and neglected, but it cannot be irradicated. In one form or another, men pray.

I believe in prayer because all history, all literature, all biography prove that this impulse of the soul may be developed, trained, cultivated until it becomes the most significant factor and influence in personal living. Men and women have learned to pray so that their religion does not consist in running to God in emergencies, but in walking with God all the time. I cannot question the validity of this continuous witness to the reality of prayer.

I believe in prayer because from my babyhood I have been taught to pray, and this bit of my childhood I have taken along with me. It is bound up with that faith in Jesus which is the deepest reality of my life. I do not believe in prayer because first I believe in God. I have learned to believe in God because I have continued to pray. Prayer is the practise of the presence of God. It is by treating God

as a Person that one learns that He is a Person, The Rewarder of them that seek Him.

I believe in prayer because of what prayer has done for me. I have proved its reality in my own experience in a fashion so direct and authentic that there is no room for doubt. This 'proof' does not consist in what is sometimes called a 'direct answer' to prayer, although I have no hesitancy or compunction about taking anything that lies near my heart to God. It consists in the certainty that when I seek to reach and to touch the Heart of God in prayer, that happens to me which can happen in no other way. And that which happens directs, controls and orders all my life.

SAMUEL MCCREA CAVERT

Federal Council of Churches

THE impulse to pray is found wherever man is found and has persisted throughout the whole history of the race. It must, then, be no

mere incident or accident, but something rooted in the very stuff of human nature. And if prayer is organic to human nature, it surely is reasonable to regard it as organic to reality itself, grounded in the nature of the universe of which man is an organic part.

Other human faculties are best understood as the result of a response to something real in the environment. The eye, for example, with its faculty of sight, is a result of the stimulus of light. If light were not a reality, we should not be seeing creatures. Is it not the most reasonable hypothesis to regard the faculty of prayer as similarly testifying to something real in the nature of the universe that calls it into being?

If the universe in which we live is in any sense spiritual, and not a mere machine, then prayer is not a violation of any law of nature, but is itself one of the laws of nature—a transcendent law of the development of spiritual personality.

And if the final reality is rightly conceived in terms of personality, prayer is the supreme

method of adjusting oneself harmoniously to the universe, of attaining a clarification and unification of one's purposes by consciously lifting them up into the light of the Divine Purpose. It is a means of unifying my inner life around the highest values that I know.

Disappointment in prayer comes from conceiving it in lower terms than these—from regarding it as entreating God for *things,* rather than as an entering into a conscious fellowship with God; or from assuming that we need to change God's purposes toward us, whereas it is not God, but we, that need to be changed. And prayer changes us, making it possible for God to do in and through us what He could not otherwise do.

Hugo Cedegren

Stockholm, Sweden

TWO things are outstanding in my childhood memories, love and prayer. Those two became one every night, when mother sat down at my

bedside, folding her hands, as I folded mine. We prayed together the child's prayer, and so I went to sleep with peace in my heart.

Prayer was a most natural thing for me then. But there came a time, when prayer became extremely difficult, until I definitely dedicated my life to the service of God. Now prayer is a necessity for me. How does it help me? Let me state it briefly.

1. It helps me to look inwards and leave the petty things of life outside. Peace comes to my heart even in the bustle of the big city. Therefore, I often pray even in the street and find that it is by no means difficult to be alone with God there.

2. It helps me to find my way through life's maze. No decision should ever be taken without prayer—that is my experiece.

3. It helps me to fight sin in my own life and around me. As long as I am a praying man, evil has no power over me. To stop praying, means to become the victim of temptations, to lose in the fight.

When should a man pray? Regularly, morn-

ing and evening, always in connection with reading of the word of God. But also any moment in life, when he feels a need for prayer. The more he practises prayer, the greater will be his need to pray. Faith will be contagious in the same degree as prayer is sincere and regular.

O, Lord and Master, teach me how to pray!

Edmund B. Chaffee

Labor Temple, New York

FROM my earliest recollections I have prayed. I was taught to think of God not only as the cause of all things, but as my friend to whom I could tell all and from whom I could receive all that was needful for me. Prayer, this talking with God, has been a great source of strength, perhaps the greatest source of strength of my life. I have examined this practice of prayer with all the tools of a

critical and sceptical philosophy, but it stands. Prayer seems to me to be the way we link up our lives with the eternal source of all energy. It is the way we make it possible for God to help us. Thankfulness, praise, confession of failure, the plea for help for my fellows and myself are all elements in my Prayer. Without it I am nothing; with it I find God's will and the strength to carry it out. This is why in the presence of the disillusionments of this after the war period I find it possible to fight on for a human society based on good will.

C. Y. Cheng

Shanghai, China

PRAYER is a perfectly natural thing in life. In one sense every person prays. It is far more easy to believe in prayer than otherwise. I am concious of my constant need of a power that is beyond and above that of my own. I therefore trust in an intelligent, personal, spir-

itual Being for that power. It is only natural that I should have a definite means of communication with such a Being which is prayer.

Prayer therefore is not merely asking for things. To be sure asking is a part of my prayer, an important part too. But not that alone. It has a much larger scope. It is a fellowship, a cooperation, an understanding between the finite and the Infinite, the seen and the Unseen, the human and the Superhuman.

Such a spiritual fellowship is at once positive and practical notwithstanding the fact that we have not yet explored all its possibilities.

THE SEARCH

By Thomas Curtis Clark

I SOUGHT His love in sun and stars,
And where the wild seas roll,
But found it not. As mute I stood,
Fear overwhelmed my soul;
But when I gave to one in need,
I found the Lord of love indeed.

I sought His love in lore of books,
In charts of science' skill;
They left me orphaned as before—
His love eluded still;
Then in despair I breathed a prayer;
The Lord of love was standing there!

GEORGE W. COLEMAN

Boston, Massachusetts

OF COURSE I believe in prayer. But not because I was brought up that way and still less because religious authorities enjoin it. My own experience and what I know about human life tell me that prayer is as natural as the breath of life. Prayer has many forms of expression not to mention an infinite variety of counterfeit expressions. Availing prayer is an attitude of the soul, spontaneous, continuing, all-absorbing. The matter of place, time and form is wholly secondary. Prayer is conscious

communion with the Infinite One, motivated by a sense of need and dependence, inspired by sorrow or joy, and practiced for the sake of fellowship with the Unseen.

But habitual, recurrent, repetitive prayer undertaken for anything less than the satisfaction of the soul's clamorous needs is as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Desperate prayer, fairly assaulting the throne of God, is more in keeping than eloquent ascriptions telling the Almighty what He already knows about himself. But to predicate the answers to our prayers is to me a near approach to blasphemy, putting one's self in the place of God. To cry out passionately for help in some dark hour, to sound pæans of praise in some moment of ecstacy, to quietly seek guidance in the day of perplexity, to humbly give thanks for all our mercies, these are the reactions, it seems to me, of a normal mind unclouded and a sound heart unembittered. And even if there were no God to hear and care, the reaction on the one who thus prays is wholesome and blessed.

We Believe In Prayer

JAMES E. CROWTHER

Grace M. E. Church, St. Louis

"PLEASE offer a prayer after the sermon so as to give the organist a chance to blow up a wind."

This pulpit admonition for visiting preachers crudely states a too-prevalent idea of the function of prayer. Prayer becomes a convenience; a means of getting some unworthy thing from God which otherwise would not be our portion. Whatever may be said about the acquisitive function of prayer, at least we may conclude with Job: "Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways." It is communion with the Eternal; fellowship with the Divine; yearning for the Infinite. All who have sounded a nobler note concerning God; who have enriched our concepts of human duty, have been men of prayer. Jesus was the supreme example of intelligent and effective prayer.

It is thus that prayer gives significance to life. The unrest and unreality of life grow out of engrossment in the transitory and the im-

perfect rather than the eternal and the unchanging. According to Spinoza: "Because we love that which has no constancy and no true reality, we are in a turmoil of emotions; we hate, and envy, and fear; are exalted and depressed; take even our pleasures feverishly, and never know what peace is." Prayer is an attitude of trust and confidence toward the all-wise and unchanging purpose of God. Not in reluctant resignation does it say, "Thy will be done," but with triumphant faith that God's will can never be other than good toward his children. Prayer is the unceasing quest for truth, and holiness, and self-realization, and helpful service. It is adventure and exploration in the realm of spiritual realities. The immortal values can be realized only by the soul that prays, that aspires, that adventures, that yearns and thirsts for the Infinite. And all such prayer has its unfailing answer. Wherefore, I believe in prayer!

We Believe In Prayer

VERA CAMPBELL DARR

Claremont, California

I BELIEVE in prayer because I am convinced that no other force so effectively brings to a focus, the highest powers of one's nature and releases hidden sources of energy. Many years ago I found a description of prayer which I have always found very satisfactory. "Prayer is keeping life open on the Godward side."

In guiding the unfolding development of our four boys, I have endeavored always to keep this is mind. I have tried therefore, not to "teach them prayers" but rather to help them frame their own aspirations and expressions of gratitude in their own words. I am convinced that this method has really been helping them to "Keep life open on the Godward side." Our oldest boy, who is approaching twelve, has recently decided that his prayer, which he has been using (with occasional variations) for almost a year, is no longer adequate. Even tho it was his own prayer, framed in his

own words, he feels that he has outgrown it; and now each prayer is a spontaneous expression of what is in his heart. These are some of the phrases he has used recently in his evening prayer:

> "Dear God, bless mother and daddy and all my friends—and everybody else. Thank You for everything that You have made that I can enjoy and thank You for everything You have given me to enjoy them with—thank You for my eyes, for my ears, for my mouth, for my nose—thank You for all the parts of my body. Thank You for all the beautiful things You have made—for oceans, seas, and lakes, for mountains and sunsets and all Your other works of art—Help me always to do what is right and to grow up to be a fine man. Amen."

JEROME DAVIS

Yale University

WE TEST automobiles, radios, and airplanes by the way they work. Prayer too can

meet this standard. When radio was a mere theory in some inventor's mind, it meant little to American life. When every individual could test the theory thru a receiver in his own home it meant much. Similarly with prayer, it is easy to doubt its validity but the real test lies in its effect. We all know what it means to tune in a receiver at the radio; similarly man has found in all ages and in all places a value in prayer. He does not understand the mechanism but he thrills before the consciousness of its effect. With the latest scientific discoveries revolutionizing our theory of matter, space and time, no one can dogmatically deny the possibility that a sincere soul can make his own little receiver in tune with the infinite.

Certainly, we know that comradeship with God has been the dynamic power behind some of the greatest lives of our little world. St. Paul said, "In Him we live and move and are." St. Augustine cries, "I heard God as the heart heareth." In the history of our own land some of the greatest leaders of America found prayer indispensable. Abraham Lincoln, for

instance, testifies, "In the darkest days of the Civil War when I knew nowhere else to go, I found strength in prayer."

It is easy to say that these men were deceived, that a psychiatrist could explain their prayer complex in terms of a bolstering up of the subconscious ego. Even if that were true, one could still argue that prayer is worth while. But such an explanation is itself a mere fine-spun hypothesis and it contradicts the belief of some of the greatest thinkers of the human race. There is no valid proof negating the value of prayer.

I believe in prayer because it works in my experience and in the experience of those I have faith in. For instance, Jesus incessantly kept the inner springs of communion with God clear by taking time to talk alone with his Father. There is no one in all the history of the human race who has contributed more to humanity.

We Believe In Prayer

OZORA S. DAVIS

Chicago, Illinois

I KNOW the meaning, the reality, the power of prayer. By prayer I mean specific and positive intercession. I know that something has been done in my physical body, as well as in my mind and spirit, by energies which have been released for my healing and help in response to the prayers of those who have interceded for me. How do I know? By what I have felt, by that to which I have been sensitive.

What different alignments of friendship and fellowship spring from this experience! I have not asked permission to tell this incident; but I know those who were parties to it will not censure me for telling. Edward A. Steiner was lecturing in St. Catherine's College at St. Paul. In conversation with Sister Antonia, the principal, and in response to an inquiry, he told her of my critical physical condition.

Some months before it had been my privilege

to spend some time with this great leader in Roman Catholic education, as I guided her and two sisters from the college through the new Seminary buildings, where they had shown such appreciation as I had seldom seen before of the Christian symbolism wrought into our cloister and chapels. When Dr. Steiner told Sister Antonia the last word from the hospital, she called the two sisters who had been with her in Chicago, and asked Dr. Steiner to join them there in prayer for my recovery.

How we understand and help one another when we pray together! Roman Catholic nuns and Edward A. Steiner praying together for a Protestant minister!

To prayer as Jesus made it a supreme reality and power in his own daily life; to prayer as he commissioned and encouraged his own first followers to pray; to prayer as it has been mighty in the history of the Christian people in every generation of their achievement—back to the use of prayer in the trustful spirit of little children I would call my brethren.

MARGARET DELAND

Boston, Massachusetts

THE way I feel about prayer somehow seems to fall into philosophical, instead of mystical, language. My belief in prayer is founded upon the assumption that the "I" is that part of God which experiences the Universe in the "I" environment. The "I's" consciousness of its oneness with God is, for me, prayer. Perhaps such consciousness in all the "I's," would save the world?

C. C. DILL

United States Senate

THE first thought that comes to my mind in regard to the value of prayer is the story of the colored man who said that he prayed and prayed for the Lord to stop the weeds growing in the corn, and that the weeds kept right on growing; he said then he began hoeing corn and praying also, and that the weeds stopped

growing. In other words, when he combined his own efforts with his prayers he got results, and I am wondering if there is not much of that that is applicable to all prayer.

It was Mr. Gladstone who, when asked if he believed in ghosts, replied "No, but I am afraid of them." So I think there are many others who, while we do not rely entirely on prayer, refuse to deprecate its value.

I am not an orthodox Christian, but I must say that I have always believed that my mother's prayers had much to do with my own success in life, and I think it impossible for anyone to estimate how much the prayers of others as well as ourselves affect our lives.

Charles Dobos

Youth Movement, Hungary

WHAT is prayer to me? Prayer is the heart of my life. Life itself depends on it. Prayer was not always meaningful for me. Until

eighteen or twenty, I had more the habit than the meaning of prayer. Yet the habit helped me to get the meaning of it. I was first like a swimmer, making the motions without being able to swim on the top of the water.

Modern discoveries, scientific inventions helped me to accept prayer more and more as an unexplainable yet reasonable reality of my life.

Prayer is the greatest mystery and yet the greatest reality of my life. I do not know how the X-rays heals my wounds, how melodies come through the air through the radio, yet I see their results. They work; I use them. In the same way, I cannot explain prayer yet I see its results I use it and I believe in it.

Why I pray? Because I cannot help it. Because it helps me to act always according to the highest and purest motives; because it constantly keeps me before God.

How I pray? I try to pray through the Bible! It helps a great deal.

I do not consider anything in my life as something secular, that does not pertain to

God. All things of my life belong to Him and it is prayer that unifies my whole life.

I have started a book on the experimental reality of prayer. I put down in it when I started to pray for something and on the opposite page how and when did God answer it. This way I gathered clouds of testimonies around myself.

I am convinced that it is through prayer that the power of the Spirit enters my life and energizes my soul.

J. STANLEY DURKEE

Plymouth Church, Brooklyn

PRAYER, to me, is a personal conversation with God. To me, God is Father, Friend, personal companion. As such I talk with Him.

When Jesus came, the people of education were teaching that God was the unknowable. To pronounce the Ineffable Name, was to court death. But Jesus brushed all that aside. He said, "Do you see these flowers? Your Father

made them! Do you see these birds? Your Father cares for them! Do you see these sunsets? Your Father painted them!"

So, my Father, having all power, can and will answer my needs as I talk them over with Him. Just to talk with Him often reveals the way by which I myself can meet my needs. But in the crises of life when my wisdom was not sufficient and my strength too small, He has definitely taken charge and directed me to paths of power and peace such that only divine wisdom could have chosen.

I believe in prayer more than I believe in any other thing. I believe, because I know. My habit is to pull up next to mine a special chair in my study and invite Him to sit down and talk with me. I look into His face—what kindly eyes of understanding and love—and simply talk with Him regarding my needs, my cares, my questions, my sorrows, my joys.

Be sure I do not do all the talking. I have learned to gain that stillness in which I can hear Him speak. I have discovered that connection by which He allows His strength to

pour itself into me. By that connection I can, by prayer, instantly liberate strength to others in need in any part of the world. So—"He walks with me and He talks with me."

SHERWOOD EDDY

New York

WE CAN prove the reality of prayer only by praying. No philosophy can prove or disprove it. No philosophy or science has ever shown that God cannot put a thought in the mind of man. If he cannot, he is more helpless than a little child or any man who asks and receives what he needs from a friend. If God can put a thought in the mind of man, he can thereby answer most prayers through human cooperation.

Should anyone say that he does not know how to pray, he may soon learn the beginning of this simple art. Let him turn to the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 6:5-14. As a be-

ginning Jesus teaches a typical prayer. Here are six petitions, three of them concerning God and three concerning our need. The prayer begins with "Our Father," his name or character, His kingdom of good, and his will on earth. It also embraces our daily bread, our debts, and our temptations. Of the six petitions, one only is of material or temporal need, and that just enough for one day's supply of food. The other five petitions are occupied with the great moral and spiritual ends of life, for man does not live by bread alone. Here is a model prayer for us. It is being uttered daily by men who are praying in every tongue. By learning not its words, but its spirit, we too may enter into a new life of prayer.

A. STANLEY EDDINGTON

Cambridge University, England

SCIENCE is no longer disposed to identify reality with concreteness. Materialism in its literal sense is long since dead.

The crucial point for us is not a conviction of the existence of a supreme God but a conviction of the revelation of a supreme God. I speak of the revelation implied in the in-dwelling of the divine spirit in the mind of man.

It is, I think, of the very essence of the unseen world that the conception of personality should dominate it. Force, energy, dimensions belong to the world of symbols. It is out of such conceptions that we have built up the external world of physics. What other conceptions have we? After exhausting physical methods we returned to the inmost recesses of consciousness, to the voice that proclaims our personality; and from there we entered on a new outlook. We have to build the spiritual world out of symbols taken from our own personality, as we build the scientific world out of the symbols of the mathematician.

In its early day Quakerism owed much to a people who called themselves Seekers. It is a name which must appeal strongly to the scientific temperament. It is perhaps difficult sufficiently to emphasize Seeking without disparag-

ing its correlative Finding. But I must risk this, for Finding has a clamorous voice that proclaims its own importance. Yet how transitory it proves. The finding of one generation will not serve for the next. It tarnishes rapidly except it be preserved with an ever-renewed spirit of seeking. It is the same, too, in science. How easy in a popular lecture to tell of the findings, the new discoveries which will be amended, contradicted, superseded in the next fifty years! How difficult to convey the scientific spirit of seeking which fulfills itself in this tortuous course of progress toward truth! You will understand the true spirit neither of science nor religion unless seeking is placed in the forefront.

Rejection of creed is not inconsistent with being possessed by a living belief. We have no creed in science, but we are not lukewarm in our beliefs. The belief is not that all the knowledge of the universe which we hold so enthusiastically will survive in the letter; but a sureness that we are on the road. If our so-called facts are changing shadows, they are

shadows cast by the light of constant truth. So too in religion we are repelled by that confident theological doctrine which has settled for all generations just how the spiritual world is worked, but we need not turn aside from the measure of light that comes into our experience showing us a way through the unseen world.

Religion for the conscientious seeker is not all a matter of doubt and self-questionings. There is a kind of sureness which is very different from cocksureness.

J. PASSMORE ELKINTON

Philadelphia

EVERY man needs often to choose his path. Shall I take this job or that? Shall I use leisure for reading or for golf? The Sabbath? Shall it be used for church or wholly for rest and recreation?

How can such choices be made rightly?

There is a condition of quiet in one's mind when guidance comes clearly. Is it not evidently the Divine leading?

See man's creations, factories, houses, highways—each a picture in some human mind before it grew to be. What is this strange thing which has power to imagine, to reason and to love? Personality.

Our friends, after all, are our most precious possessions, and what are they? Persons,—ah, spirits. They elude our definition and are invisible. Yet the thing that makes them strong and true is personality.

Surely all nature, including man, is the creation of the Living God Who thinks and wills and loves—a father, Jesus said.

And Jesus Christ Himself. Why do we hesitate to feel that His spirit abides in the hearts of men? One with the Father, to rescue and make great, human lives.

Listening is prayer—listening eagerly, more concerned to follow the will of the Holy One than do aught else with the little time and strength we have. There are many ways to

pray, to worship; privately, and in fellowship. Some men speak often of their human love. Naturally they speak often and out loud to God. Prayer and words may do another heart much good. Others stand in silent adoration before the greatness and the goodness and the Holy purposes of God.

I believe in prayer, especially as a constant attitude toward God.

W. H. P. FAUNCE

Brown University

THE essence of prayer is not begging, not insisting or imploring; the essence of prayer is communication or conversation. It is the establishing of conscious contact with God, so that His wisdom, peace, strength, may flow into our little, restless, troubled souls. Then we come to experience what Paul described: "His working that worketh in me mightily." Just as by thrusting a wire into a socket I was

able to hear the voice of the English Premier, Ramsay MacDonald and receive the inspiration of his potent message, so by putting my mind in the attitude of reception and faith I receive the unceasing messages of God.

If we find some ancient liturgy helpful in establishing such connection, let us use it. If we find the "prayer-meeting" helpful, we can still use that. If we prefer the Quaker silence, that can be secured even amid the roar of Manhattan. If we prefer to avoid times and seasons, and simply open the soul many times each day with a "Guide me now!" that may be the highest form of worship and reception. Establishing by frequent acts of will contact with the infinite resources of the Father of Spirits—that is prayer.

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

New York

THERE are forms of prayer and theories concerning it which have been outgrown by

the intelligent. The persistence of them and the identification of praying with them are the chief obstacles to the successful experience of prayer in multitudes of lives. Praying as a magical way of getting our desires; praying as petitionary violence winning over a reluctant God; praying as a means of reminding God of good he might otherwise forget to do or be unwilling to undertake—such ideas and the practises associated with them seem to me plainly sub-Christian. Any conception of prayer which forgets that the universe is law-abiding in its spiritual as well as in its physical aspects awakens false expectations, presupposes a capricious favoritism in God which is unworthy of him, and in the end alienates thoughtful people.

Prayer to me is primarily the fulfilment of spiritual conditions in a law-abiding spiritual world and getting appropriate spiritual results. Let a man learn the prayerful attitudes of receptivity and openness toward the divine and he will be able to rely upon the consequence. Praying is not a charity organization society

where one can get something for nothing. One must fulfil the spiritual conditions before the results will come. Moreover these results are commensurate with the conditions met and have nothing to do with the running of the physical universe or the gaining of material benefits save as the indirect consequence of spiritual changes.

Prayer is the time exposure of the soul to the highest that we know and he who practises it will learn its central, primary, and transforming importance. Prayer is the fulfilment of man's highest capacity to look, not down alone nor out, but up, and to adore. Prayer is the road to the crowning experience of human life, being carried out of ourselves by something greater than ourselves to which we give ourselves. Prayer is taking in earnest the central affirmation of religion that there is a responsive Spirit at the heart of reality in communion with whom is our power and peace. True prayer is never an endeavor to change the divine purpose but is always an endeavor to release it through the one who prays into the world.

We Believe In Prayer

GEORGE FOWLDS

New Zealand

I BELIEVE in Prayer because I have so often experienced its reality and its power. Not once, but numberless times I have experienced its uplifting and transforming influence during my sixty-nine years of life.

I don't believe that by prayer I can alter God, or His attitude towards me, but I do believe that by prayer I can alter myself and alter my attitude towards God.

I don't believe that by prayer I can persuade God to suspend or alter His Divine laws in order to grant my requests, but I do believe that by prayer I can attain a clearer conception of what His Laws are and can help God to bring my life and conduct into harmonious relationship with His Laws, thus securing the beneficence and health of Body, Mind, and Soul which such harmonious relationship confers.

I believe in the vibratory theory of light.

I believe that through vibrations in the Ether I can hear the voice of my friend by wireless, although we may be separated by thousands of miles, and that he can equally hear my voice if I comply with the necessary conditions.

I believe further that the human mind in the process of thinking sets up a still higher range of vibrations, which vibrations reach out to a limitless extent; and that other human minds wherever situated, if properly attuned to the transmitting mind like the receiving instrument has to be attuned to the receiving instrument in wireless, can receive and interpret those vibrations so transmitted.

Reasoning therefore, as it appears to me quite logically from the known to the unknown, I have no difficulty in believing that, with human Minds and Souls attuned to the Great Mind and Soul of the Universe, God will always hear and always answer Prayer; but His answer, like the answer of a wise Human Father to his child must often be a firm and emphatic No.

We Believe In Prayer

WILLIAM GOODELL FROST
Berea College

PRAYER is the Core of Religion. Two groups need help: Those who think they have too little belief to pray, and those whose prayer routine does not bring them to the Fountains.

The word stands for three supreme Experiences.

Contemplation. Successful spirits of every age and race have had the quiet hour. The soul shuts out lesser things and comes to a realization of its growing ideals. And in this contemplation, men meet a Guiding Love that links them to the universe. His best name is Heavenly Father—Father to us, though back of His Fatherhood are limitless expanses of power and mystery.

Enlistment. Each meanest soul has urges toward world betterment and the unbeliever can enlist—give allegiance to his growing ideals. And the contemplative and enlisted soul comes to realize a thrilling partnership with the Heavenly Father working for righteousness.

Aspiration. Such thoughts and endeavors bring to consciousness the soul's needs. Its desires are disinfected from the taint of selfishness. Daily bread, the marvel of forgiveness even, are as expressions of that central desire for the good of all God's creatures.

And the Father is so close that it is good to confide to Him our human desires, as did Paul touching his infirmity, blessed by divine sympathy even when the immediate petition is denied.

Prayer brings the temper for "laborers together with God."

ZONA GALE

I BELIEVE in the value of prayer as I believe in the "practice of the presence" of God. These are not different.

Prayer is not primarily to petition. It is primarily to become acutely aware of the presence of God, and it is the effort to become activated by that presence. It is not "Be near

me." It is "Let me be aware of this continual nearness. Let me touch this energy, be open to it, be affected by it. Thus all that I do will tend to become energized by that power—not myself, which I recognize without knowing how to define."

Quite outside the area of mechanism—as we now know the machine of us—lies this area of awareness. It is unquestionably mechanistic in the same sense as are our mental and bodily processes, but we are not able as yet to chart the mechanics of the spirit. We do not know how we put ourselves into relation with influences which our minds do not detect. We can not define that process, or describe how we receive its results. But it happens after prayer.

Aware of the interpretation given to all this by the behaviorists and others, we accept their explanation so far as it goes. But beyond all that they offer, move results which are not explained by them. It may be that the Will to Believe literally produces—not belief, but the new mechanism by means of which this other functioning is carried on.

Certainly prayer produces results. By acute awareness of a spiritual order—or presence if you prefer—the unknown "I" within one may tap a reservoir of power of which we know nothing. Perhaps the "I" within touches the intelligence without, momentarily becomes conscious of its identification with it, and is empowered.

"What!" tadpole must have exclaimed to tadpole. "Do you mean that when you put your nose above water, there is actually something *else* than water to breathe? Absurd!"

M. K. GANDHI

India

I HAVE your letter for which I thank you. In answer to your question I can say in one sentence that prayer has given me peace. There is a verse we sing every day in the morning which means: "I seek not kingdom, nor paradise, nor even salvation; I seek only the deliverance from affliction of the afflicted."

We Believe In Prayer

CHARLES W. GILKEY
University of Chicago

I BELIEVE in prayer: first, because I grow more and more conscious of my need, under the increasing pressure of the details and distractions in modern life, for a deliberate daily refocusing upon the main objectives of my own life and for truing it up each day by the highest standards. Second, because I find through prayer a deeper awareness of that "beloved community" which includes, not only those I love, but also "all sorts and conditions of men" —for whom it is alike my comfort and my privilege to pray; which includes also those faithful souls of the generations gone before and includes likewise those who are to follow after us, whose future inheritance is already our present trust.

Third, I believe in prayer because I realize more and more the need of redirecting my daily living into closer co-operation with the ongoing processes and purposes of God as they reveal themselves more fully with the passing

days and years, and of reënforcing my own best purposes with the energies that I find to be available when personal contact is thus made and maintained with powers greater than my own.

Finally, I believe in prayer because I find that when I thus turn into daily practice religion's fundamental faith in the cosmic significance of the values that are most clearly revealed to us through our human personalities and in their relations, and when in such personal converse I say "Thou" to That in the universe which has produced and developed these values, an answering "Thou" comes back to me which deepens and enlarges into a growing sense of personal fellowship with the God Whom I can thus "In Jesus name" call Father, and into an assurance that little as I can claim to understand Him or His relation to this universe of which I and we are so small a part, He is to be fully trusted nevertheless in the conservation and furtherance of all that is most valuable, both for the life which now is and for that which is to come.

PEACE

KILBEE GORDON

Victoria, B. C.

ONCE, in the hush of an evensong prayer,
There came a sweet light thro' the dusk-laden air,
As bowed down with sorrow and weighted with care,
I spoke, in a whisper, with God.

The organ subdued, and the voices sublime
Both faded in quiet, and silence betime,
Save wavelets of seraph wings whiter than rime,
Betokened the presence of God.

How long I remained in that church I ne'er knew,
But o'er me the rays of that light fell as dew,
My heart opened widely for all to review—
The peace, in my soul, was from God!

JAMES M. GRAY

President of the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago

MANY years ago when I was a little boy, perhaps six or seven years of age, a serious

crisis arose in our home life. One night I was awakened from sleep by hearing my mother crying in another room. I arose and ran out to her, and found her peering out of the window, looking for someone to return. Tugging at her dress to make her conscious of my presence, I exclaimed,

"Mother, mother, doesn't God answer prayer?"

I think I hear her yet, after nearly threescore years and ten, replying reluctantly, I thought, and very despondently,

"Yes."

Then I fell upon my knees by the side of an old-fashioned cane-seated chair, the moonbeams are still playing upon it in my memory, and I cried out to God to end our sorrow and quickly bring that to pass for which my mother longed.

My prayer was answered, and in the morning I was awakened by the loud rejoicings of the household, for the sheep that was lost had been found!

That was my first answer to prayer, my first

real prayer in fact, my first introduction to God as I have always thought of it; but from that day till this I have believed in prayer and practised it with great blessing.

Someone may say, "O, that was just a coincidence." But I have had so many since, and they have proved so valuable and pleasant that I urge my skeptical readers to try a few.

My first prayer was thus one of faith afterwards confirmed by experience, and experience has continued to confirm faith. But for all that, I would not now place experience before the Bible, which in my judgment is the Word of God. It is the latter that now confirms my faith, whether my prayers are answered immediately or not, and whether they are answered just as I desired or expected them to be answered or not.

I have the recorded dealings of God with Abraham and the other patriarchs for my faith to rest upon; and His dealings with David and the prophets, and with the New Testament apostles and the early disciples of Christ. See for example, such Scriptures as

Genesis, chapter 18; Psalm 32; Nehemiah, chapters 1 and 2; Acts, chapters 4 and 12, and many more. But beyond all, I have the precious promise of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who said in Matthew 7:11, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

ABEL J. GREGG

National Y. M. C. A., New York

THE greatest quest upon which to persuade youth to embark is the life-long and life-wide seeking for fellowship with a living, loving Father God. Prayer is the way of such a quest. Wherever men seek an aspect of truth, a law of nature, a manifestation of beauty, an embodied quality or any other fellowship with God, they use the common way of prayer. Be they scientists, inventors, artists, lovers of men or lovers of God, they use prayer in its wide

meanings and methods of passionate search, concentrated yearning, unchangeable faith and consecrated endeavor. So is fellowship with God achieved.

An abundant life aids a quest. It is a great social necessity. Many social ills will be remedied as more and more men live abundant lives. It is also a great personal achievement open only to those who have learned to trust their visions to discipline themselves, to persist faithfully in the face of difficulties, to become versatile in achieving and to test truly whatever they do with the best they are able continuously to conceive about a loving God.

A personality, unified and integrated through a fellowship with a loving Father God is the highest goal man has visioned for his own development. Jesus demonstrated the beauty, the truth and the loveableness of such a personality. He demonstrated the way such an integration was to be achieved. His disciples saw the demonstration and valued it enough to request, "Lord, teach us to pray!" Jesus began simply. He taught them the words and some-

thing of the spirit of prayer. He lived so as to demonstrate prayer in all its wider and more powerful meanings as it was caught up into His thoughts, words and deeds. He was thus able to proclaim His unity with a loving Father God.

Youth the world around demonstrates its possession of capacities needed for these great achievements. Such capacities should be set in motion toward achieving a personality in growing unity with a loving God, achieving an abundant life through such unity, and in achieving ever enriched fellowship with God in life-long and life-wide abundance. Prayer in thought, word, and deed is the way of achievement. Therefore, would I learn so to pray unceasingly and learn how to teach youth so to pray.

ALBERT C. GRIER

New York

I HESITATE to say I believe in prayer for "believe" indicates a doubt. I *know* the power

of prayer. But prayer is not begging—it is putting oneself into the attitude of receiving, it is contacting the deeper springs of God. I have seen cancers healed by prayer—I have seen drunkards cured—I have seen sinners made pure—I have seen failure turned to success—I have seen thieves return stolen goods—I have seen poverty turned to riches—I have seen broken hearts mended and hopelessness turned into triumph.

I believe Jesus' promises about prayer and I believe in his kind of prayer—"When you pray believe that ye have received and ye shall have."

It is not wringing from a reluctant God any good, but it is the clear seeing of the good that God created in the beginning—"Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free." To believe in prayer is one thing, to know its power is a very different and a more dynamic thing, as Jesus demonstrated. True prayer is the most powerful thing in this world.

We Believe In Prayer

SIDNEY L. GULICK
New York

I BELIEVE in prayer because I believe in God, in Man and in Jesus Christ.

Prayer, rightly understood, is the intercourse of finite, imperfect persons with the infinite, perfect Person who is within, behind and before all being and all becoming.

Prayer begins with a man's sense of personal need, imperfection, weakness and sin. Prayer as communion is possible because God and man both possess essential likeness of spiritual nature.

Jesus, the man, was the first of men to experience in His own person the reality and the fullness of the divine in a human life. To those who know Jesus, God, although the ultimate and absolute and infinite, is Christ-like in character and purpose. To them Jesus was God incarnate in human form, reconciling the world to Himself.

In proportion as men come to know God, trust Him, love Him and desire to do His

will, do they seek to commune with Him, giving Him their adoration and receiving from Him inspiration and motive power. They find in Jesus the norm of their own lives. They seek to be Christ-like. The society also which they create and in which they live, itself becomes more wholesome, just and friendly, more fitted to the begetting of men and women who are like Christ.

Prayer thus is the communion and intercourse of the human with the Infinite Spirit. Through prayer men gain fresh consciousness of their relations to God, of their divine sonship. They feel themselves reconciled to Him notwithstanding weaknesses and sins. They receive renewed zest for life, with renewed assurance and hope and power. Their will is strengthened to persevere in the Christian way of life in spite of obstacles, failures and adversities in the outer world of time and sense and of spiritual struggles in the inner world of mind and heart and will.

I believe in prayer because I believe in God and in man and in Jesus Christ.

We Believe In Prayer

TASUKU HARADA
University of Hawaii

Though it be the way of God
To guide us without a prayer,
The man's heart true and undefiled
Moves one to kneel in prayer.
—Translation of a Japanese poem

I HAVE always believed in prayer even before embracing the Christian faith, though the deity I prayed to remained "unknown." In the time of unusual joy as well as of sorrow it had been perfectly natural for me to pray to the "unknown." The teaching of science led me away for a time to be skeptical, but the gap was soon filled with a faith in God, the Father of all mankind. The Christian conception of the relation between God and man has ever since furnished the basis and reasons for prayer, the center of my religious living. The peace of mind and the sense of resignation that I usually experience after prayer I

count among the signs of an answer by God, almighty and loving, the source of every good and perfect gift of life.

PRAYER FOR PUBLISHERS

LEWIS O. HARTMAN

Zion's Herald

O THOU God of all wisdom, whose Son Jesus Christ hath heralded throughout the earth the good news of an invisible and eternal kingdom of love and truth, bless, we pray Thee, all messengers of light everywhere. We thank Thee that underneath the manifold struggles of life and the mysterious contradictions of this world, there ever abides a fundamental rationality and meaning and that with the process of the suns, mankind is slowly apprehending the beneficent purposes of the Infinite Father. Open our blind eyes, we beseech Thee, that we may not only discover secrets of hidden knowledge and come to understand particular phases of truth, but also discern at least in dim outline the Creator's all-embracing plan.

Help us never to fear the truth. Give us minds hospitable to every new philosophic insight, to every fresh scientific discovery. Courage, Lord, is our pressing need—courage to hear, to speak, to write, to act in accordance with heavenly principles. Forbid that, as we follow the gleam, any one of us should ever be intimidated by the dread of possible consequences and, abandoning the quest, should become a mere man-pleaser when he might be winning the approval of a righteous God.

Forgive our sins. We are weak, but Thou art strong. Thou knowest our frame and rememberest that we are dust. We humbly confess that we have sometimes bartered the truth for selfish advantage or for commercial gain. Look down in mercy upon us and guard us from the insidious iniquity of false propagandism. Save us from this terrible prostitution, and help us to preserve the honor and integrity of our souls. Let Thy richest benediction rest upon all those who are seeking in any way to reveal the love and wisdom of God to their fellow men. Be Thou the guide and constant companion of scholars in the midst of their research, of the writers of books and the publishers of them, of the makers of newspapers and magazines, of all who train the minds of men or mold public opinion. Grant that these Thy servants may ever

walk in the path of the just, which is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Amen.

George Edmund Haynes

Federal Council of Churches

AS WE look out upon our world today we are conscious more than ever of so many mysteries in the things that appear upon the surface that we have a growing conviction that beyond and beneath what we can see and know are limited depths and heights and breadths of Reality which we must embrace even though we cannot prove. When we come face to face with the perplexities of modern life with its flux and change and the certainty of the short span of our earthly sojourn, our very souls cry out for the Eternal.

And so we establish through prayer our relationship with that Being who abides in our innermost selves, within the microscopic life

below our sight and the distant stars beyond our conception. We seek communion with that Presence who can shed a meaning upon the routine of our daily lives and give us certainty of the Life that is to be.

THEODORE HELINE

Rosicrucian Fellowship

I BELIEVE in prayer. I believe prayer to be the very breath of the spirit. As the body inhales a portion of the atmosphere surrounding it and specializes it to its own purposes, so does the spirit in prayer draw unto itself a substance from the ocean of Being by which it grows in power and expands in consciousness.

What is true prayer but an expression in thought, word and deed of a realization that we are part of a whole? What is it but a recognition of our incompleteness, a desire for fulfilment, and an interchange between spirit and spirit?

What is true prayer but the soul reaching out for its own, whether it be in childish petitions or in confessions of weakness and failure, or in exultant pæans of praise?

Is not prayer a merging of the spirit-self in the vastness of its own Source and Goal, the part seeking the Whole, from which it is separated temporarily in consciousness only, even as a water drop, becoming vapor, cloud and stream, returns at length into the boundless deep whence it came?

Prayer is a conscious circulation of the Infinite in the finite, the finite in the Infinite. It may be longing, it may be speech, it may be action. It is all these and more for it is of the very essence of Life Itself.

HENRY T. HODGKIN

Philadelphia

I WAS brought up to pray and learned to use and value prayer long before I had any idea that a theory of prayer was possible or de-

sirable. I still use prayer because I still find it a helpful and indeed a necessary part of my life, having in the meantime tried and discarded many theories.

Prayer is valuable to me as a reminder of the limitation and weakness of my own life and the power which comes through reverent dependence on God, as an outlet for the desire to give thanks for good things, to help those I love, to offer myself in trustful love to the source of my being. In prayer I have a sense of the reality and friendliness of God, and without some such sense, words of prayer seem to me to be a mockery. The best theory of prayer which I have is that thereby I can, as it were, get into the stream of God's loving purposes for myself and the world. My own personality may, through prayer, became a medium for the carrying out of the Divine will. I should define intercession as imagination directed by love, energized by faith and illuminated by love. In thinking of another and his needs before God I am persuaded that in some way his life is enriched.

We Believe In Prayer

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

Community Church, New York

I LOOK at prayer from the humanistic rather than from the theological point of view. Prayer is not a dogma, but a practice; it is not an idea, but an experience. In its essence it means three things:

First, prayer is the deliberate formulation in our mind of the idea of something that we need or want. Our desires are always outrunning our attainments; we are always reaching for something beyond us and above us. When we formulate our desire in a clear statement of the mind, we are praying. Prayer from this point of view is the conscious, deliberate fixation of our inner attention upon the needs and aspirations of our lives.

Secondly, prayer is the deliberate direction of our life forces to the attainment of our desires. Prayer is attention unfolding into intention. It is the formulation and expression of purpose, resolution, dedication.

Lastly, prayer is the identification of the intention of our lives with the larger intention, or purpose, of the universe. We are not alone, in other words, in our desires, as we are not alone in our existence. What we are, and what we want, we share with the cosmos. Thus we do not work alone, but may gather to our aid the forces akin to ourselves, but so much greater than ourselves, that fill the world. Prayer, in its ultimate and highest meaning, is the conscious and deliberate attempt to gain contact with the universe, and thus to merge our lives with the life of the whole.

From beginning to end, prayer is an experience within ourselves. If it is directed to the attainment of ends beyond ourselves, this is only because "no man liveth unto himself." But the process of prayer is a human process. Our prayers are the expression, as their answer is the achievement, of our own lives. God helps us only when and as we help ourselves.

As to the power of prayer, no one can fail to be impressed by the words of Mahatma

Gandhi who says, "Without prayer I could do nothing. First and foremost in the program for the holy National Week I put fasting and prayer. I have emphasized the necessity of both these for the unfoldment of our national life. I speak of these from personal experience."

W. A. VISSER 'T HOOFT

World's Committee, Y. M. C. A., Geneva, Switzerland

PRAYER seems to me to be inseparably connected with faith in a personal God. Whenever in me the awareness of God's supreme right to rule all of my life fades I cannot pray. Whenever I do not pray God's existence becomes an idea instead of a reality.

When at the time of adolescence I began to enjoy using my capacities for rational thinking, the first result was a complete break down of

this personal view of God and consequently of prayer-life. Reason could not admit a God who would be more than a hidden impersonal force of nature. Prayer could not be anything but a sort of mystical contact with nature.

But there came a day when I had to pray otherwise—because I realized that a question was being put to me, that I was called. Could nature call? Could the blind urge behind all things put a claim before me? No, it could only be that God called Himself to the one whom he had created and who was now to answer with his life. Later on I have come to see that this God by Whom I was called is the same one who called Adam and Jesaja, St. Paul and Luther and Pasca, and who revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. Prayer has become prayer for the right prayer, not so much an act of worship or petition on the basis of a self-evident relationship with God, but rather a continuous demand for more openness, for better listening to what God has to say to me. I may not take for granted that I am able to

hear His voice. I must begin every day where I started on the day before. But it is in this never-ending search for the prayerful attitude of life that I find the strength to live. It seems to me that as soon as I cease to knock, the door will be closed. If, however, I continue to seek, I may count on the great promise that I shall find.

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH
Drew Theological Seminary

WHENEVER I think of the company of the scientists I find it easier to believe in prayer. In fact in no end of ways I find the scientists among the most interesting of the phenomena of the world. Here they are in the midst of an intricate network of the uniformities of the physical world. But in spite of the fact that they are a part of the system they can analyse it and understand it and use it. Indeed more and more they are bending it to their own purposes. They have conceived and constructed

instruments for the measuring of its activities. They have conceived and constructed all sorts of machines by means of which they use its forces. They are a perpetual illustration of the fact that it is the very nature of the great system to be used and controlled by personality.

Where the scientists do so well I cannot but believe that the greatest person of all is able to do even better. If the scientist is not caught in the coils of the system I am sure that somehow it responds to the subtle controls which come from intelligence and purpose. And because I believe that God is like the scientist rather than like the mechanical uniformities which he controls I find it easy to pray. In fact a laboratory seems to me to have the subtlest sort of kinship with a prayer meeting.

CLARENCE V. HOWELL

Reconciliation Tours, New York

HE WHO talks to God is not the most profound Pray-er, but he who listens. Prayer is

man listening to God talking. God speaks in manifold ways—audibly thru our inner consciousness.

But how does each know God speaks? Each knows just as you sense the presence of your friend whom you have not seen nor heard enter. The harp of the soul—the "heart strings"—reverberates with ecstacy to the music of his voice.

To "tune in" all speak not with the same voice nor in the same dialect nor in the same religious tongue. To some the word most potent is Allah; with others the word is Auum; still others, Jews, think Jahveh; for others the name Jesus is filled with the most precious God-content. Each and all hear thru their inner consciousness that inner voice—experience the same Blessed God.

If all experience the same blessed God the Father of all, why not have family prayers? Why not each group or representative of God's great earthly family in the same room at the same time—each in his own religious tongue—listen and hear God.

A Hindu friend and I conducted twenty-five fellowships of worship in New York City. We had Moslems open with the Muezzin call to prayer. We sang together universal spiritual songs. We had Hindu chants and Buddhist chants—as many as five and six faiths in one meeting. The spiritual presence was dominant in the meeting. We broke down the middle wall of partition. In shutting out each other group we had shut ourselves in. Perhaps a fellowship worship would find God, would establish human oneness.

CHARLES E. JEFFERSON

Broadway Tabernacle, New York

I BELIEVE in prayer because I have in me a prayer instinct. I do not know how or when it got there. All I know is that it is there and has been there ever since I can remember. It is stronger sometimes than at other times, but

I have noticed that whenever I am in a situation in which no human help is sufficient it is not easy to resist the impulse to pray. At those times I pray spontaneously and as easily as I breathe.

If I were alone in this experience it would not be significant, but men all over the world are praying and they have been praying as far back as we can trace the history of mankind. A phenomenon which is ubiquitous and persistent must have deep meaning. It indicates that prayer is rooted in the universe and that the Maker of the world created man as a praying animal.

I am confirmed in this conviction by the fact that prayer has no tendency to die out. It is not a superstition confined to the ignorant and undeveloped, but is a practice which is followed faithfully by the noblest and the most highly cultured. It is easy to offer arguments against its rationality and efficacy but these arguments however plausible and difficult to answer have never been able to check the habit of prayer. This is proof I think that men are intended to

pray and that they receive something from their praying which they can get in no other way.

When one prays he finds himself in a great company of common people and also of saints and geniuses and heroes of all races and ages. The mightiest of the holy and the holiest of the mighty, Jesus of Nazareth, was a man of prayer and he said that men ought always to pray and not to faint. I follow him.

PAUL JONES

Acting Bishop, Southern Ohio

PRAYER has become for me less an expression in words and more of an attitude in life, less of an asking and more of an aspiration. At its deepest it is a process of adjustment to the ultimate truth.

The effort to reach out in a deliberate attempt to apprehend divine truth grows out of

two elements,—one's consciousness of imperfection and partial failure on the one hand, and the recognition of an eternal rightness in life which may be approached on the other. The attempt to realize that rightness, to become one with it, is what I would call prayer; and it is a continuous process not only in what is called spiritual life, but in intellectual and physical life as well. In other words, I do not think of prayer as communion with a person—God—but as that attitude in life which is ever seeking harmonious relationships with all that is truest in the world. The result of such an attitude, consciously persisted in, is a growing confidence and strength and wholeness, a sense of being at home with God in his world.

RUFUS M. JONES

Haverford College

RELIGION is primarily and at heart the personal meeting of the soul with God and

conscious communion with Him. To give up the cultivation of prayer would mean in the long run the loss of the central thing in religion; it would involve the surrender of the priceless jewel of the soul. We might try in its stead to perfect the other aspects of religion. We might make our form of divine service very artistic or very popular; we might speak with the tongues of men and sing with the tongues almost of angels, but if we lose the power to discover and appreciate the real presence of God and if we miss the supreme joy of feeling ourselves environed by the Spirit of the living and present God, we have made a bad exchange and have dropped from a higher to a lower type of religion.

Prayer, no doubt, is a great deal more than this inner act of discovery and appreciation of God; but the joy of communion and intercourse with God is the central feature of prayer and it is one of the most impressive facts of life.

We Believe In Prayer

HELEN KELLER

I RECOGNIZE the beneficence of the power which we all worship as supreme—Order, Fate, the Great Spirit, Nature, God. I make a Friend of this indefinable force, and straightway I feel glad, brave and ready for any lot Heaven may decree for me. This is my religion of optimism.

I believe in God, I believe in man, I believe in the power of the spirit. I believe it is a sacred duty to encourage ourselves and others; to hold the tongue from any unhappy word against God's world because no man has any right to complain of a universe which God made good, and which thousands of men have striven to keep good. I believe that we should so act that we may draw nearer and more near the age when no man shall live at his ease while another suffers. These are the articles of my faith, and there is yet another on which all depends—to bear this faith above every tempest which overfloods it, and to make it a principle in disaster and through affliction.

We Believe In Prayer

HENRY CHURCHILL KING

Oberlin College

HAVE *regular* times for prayer.

Do not take the poorest time of the day; respect the body.

Give time enough to allow opportunity for eternal truths to get hold of you. When you turn from some other engrossing occupation, you need not wonder, if you are not at once in full mood for worship; time is needed.

Be absolutely *honest* from your very first words. Nothing makes prayer so unreal as lack of complete honesty.

You will find it is of use often to build on the *Lord's Prayer,* as Luther used to do—to expand and paraphrase its thoughts, and so make that substance of all prayer your own. A similar use may be made of other prayers of the Bible.

God gives only what we already partly understand, see our need of, and definitely ask for. Pray that you may be open to the *full work of the Spirit.*

A word as to intellectual difficulties with prayer. With Thomas Arnold you believe that "the only thing of moment in life or in man is character," and you cannot fail to believe that, under the government of a righteous God, the interests of character are supreme. Whatever, therefore, is necessary to the development of character is certain; whatever is helpful is probable. Now it can scarcely be doubted that one of the imperative moral and spiritual needs of man is for real access to God, and we may therefore be confident that, whether we can explain all the difficulties or not, prayer is a reality, God is our Father, not afar off, but near at hand and always accessible.

T. Z. Koo

Shanghai, China

WHAT do we Chinese see in Christianity that has led us to become Christians?

We have done so not because the mis-

sionaries have brought education, medical skill, etc., to China, although we deeply appreciate and are very grateful for that.

We see, however, that in our development as a people we have ceased to be at the point where we were a creative people.

For over a thousand years we have lived on the past. We were a highly creative people once. We had once a conception of a great and personal God. Then Confucius came, and he said, "That great Being is far away; you cannot know Him. Why bother? Try to live together on good terms."

I have come to the conclusion that a people which has lost contact with God will lose its vision and so its creative capacity dies out. If you try to raise yourself or your people without contact with a spiritual Reality, higher and greater than humanity, you are trying to lift yourself out of a chair by your own power.

We who are Christians have been brought to see that there is Someone greater than ourselves. We can rise by laying hold of Him.

We Believe In Prayer

As we study the creative movements of today in China we find in a remarkable degree that they have in their leadership men who have laid hold upon Eternal Reality in Christ.

ISAAC LANDMAN

Editor, The American Hebrew

SO LONG as the universe, and the universes beyond the one in which our world is a speck, mystify our comprehension and awe our intellect; so long as the immutable laws by which these universes operate in their unfathomable courses can in no way be affected by the will or desire or power of man; so long as humans, through their mundane experiences and spiritual outreachings yearn for justice and righteousness and love, so long will men pray, privately or publicly, audibly or in the depths of their souls.

We Believe In Prayer

W. D. LANE

Attorney

WE LIVE in a universe governed by laws. I do not believe that God will suspend or change the operation of any law of the physical world in response to prayer. I believe that the spiritual realm is also governed by laws as certain in their operation as those of the physical world. When my little girl allowed her toy balloon to escape and prayed that it would come down again I did not expect it to do so, although the prayer was one of faith. Neither do I expect that any law of the spiritual world will be violated in response to prayer. If prayer is to be answered it must be in accordance with law. And yet I believe in prayer, and that its efficacy is something more than a reflex action upon myself, otherwise it seems to me that I should not pray. But prayer may be answered not in violation of law but through the operation of law, and I believe that it is. This belief is founded upon

faith and experience; faith that God is good, and an experience that seems to me sufficient to remove all doubt.

JOHN HOWLAND LATHROP

Brooklyn

PRAYER is religion's supreme poetic exercise. By it, the mind is quickened, the affections are released and the imagination is kindled. All that is highest and holiest, the sanctified lives of the past, those nearest and dearest both living and dead, the person one might be, the ideal society, are lifted up before the mind in the moment of prayer. The impossible in hours of weakness, becomes the possible and is vividly beheld as at hand. Under the spiritual excitement of true prayer there is an accession of strength which lifts the burden from the mind, dispels discouragement and gloom, sanctifies the joys of life or brings

calmness and peace to the distraught. That there is an influx of power from sources beyond the individual when the flood gates of the spirit are thus thrown open to the true, the beautiful and the good, would seem to be the testimony of the experience of mankind with prayer. Prayer may, like all thought, be silent or spoken. It may be individual and alone, or individual while accompanied by some social expression; or it may be a communion of spirits in which the individual is lost in the common thought and feeling that rises in the company through suggestion.

A PRAYER

RUTH LE PRADE

GOD of Beauty and of Song
Heal the world of grievous wrong.

Lift our hearts and let us pray
For a freer, nobler day.

We Believe In Prayer

Let War die upon the earth,
Let World-Brotherhood have birth;

And within the hearts of men
Let Love blossom once again.

God of Beauty and of Song
Heal Thy world of grievous wrong!

FREDERICK J. LIBBY

Washington, D. C.

I BELIEVE in prayer as a great and dimly comprehended resource of the human spirit. A wiser generation will explore its mysteries and formulate its immutable laws. For prayer is undoubtedly an exact science. Why does not my prayer remove mountains? Verily because I do not pray aright.

Jesus taught his disciples how to pray. Their lives prove it. But the secret is to be found not in certain beloved sentences that men today

vainly repeat by rote; rather in a spirit which the narrative does not convey to our dull minds.

Prayer begins as hunger: "Ask," ask from the deeps within you. Prayer continues as silent, importunate waiting upon God. Prayer waits expectant, helpful, with concentrated, growing hunger, confident of God's sympathy but wisely conscious also that it is venturing into the realm where perfect love holds omniscient sway: "If it be possible—wise,—nevertheless not my will—thine!"

When the authoritative textbook on prayer is written, the convictions of the pious will, I believe, be abundantly supported: That prayer is efficacious not only for the transformation of the Simon in me into Peter but far, far more widely. It will, I believe, be established that prayer for those I love can flow from me to them like a healing stream. I "ask" and lo, within me occurs a subconscious adjustment by which radiant energy is directed through the divine ether straight to its mark. Some day

the blind will receive their sight again and the dead will rise when singly and corporately God's children learn once more how to pray.

A PRAYER TO ALL THE DEAD AMONG MINE OWN PEOPLE

By VACHEL LINDSAY

ARE these your presences, my clan from Heaven?
Are these your hands upon my wounded soul?
Mine own, mine own, blood of my blood be with me,
Fly by my path till you have made me whole!

AT MASS

No doubt to-morrow I will hide
My face from you, my King.
Let me rejoice this Sunday noon,
And kneel while gray priests sing.

It is not wisdom to forget.
But since it is my fate
Fill thou my soul with hidden wine
To make this white hour great.

My God, my God, this marvellous hour
I am your son, I know.
Once in a thousand days your voice
Has laid temptation low.

Fred Lockley

Oregon Journal

AM I a praying man? That depends on your definition of prayer. I say no formal prayers but never a day goes by that I do not talk to God. If I am going to write an article or make a talk I say; "Its up to you God. You know I am anxious to lift men's thoughts up to you, to give them a vision of serving you thru service to their fellow men. I am counting on your help."

It seems to me that if I am a son of God

then all those who are trying to make this world a better place to live in are my brothers. Irrespective of their color, creed or nationality, I can't bring myself to hate my brother men.

If asking and expecting help of God is prayer then I believe in prayer. I believe that if we would all ask to be more just, more tolerant, more charitable, more willing to give and less anxious to get we would remove the causes for suspicion, misunderstandings and the causeless hatreds that lead to war.

Personally I feel better and can do better work when I can tell God my problems and ask His help in solving them.

Caroline A. Lowe

Attorney

I FIND the sense of peace and security that comes from the consciousness of the existence of universal law, which if obeyed is universal love and sustenance and life,—God. As obedi-

ence to the law of electricity, which is one manifestation of God, brings us light and heat and music and marvelous progress on the road to a higher civilization, so obedience to the law of love, of righteousness and justice and truth, brings a sense of spiritual ease and content found in no other way, and leads to ever greater unfoldment of the law, keener discernment of its applications, greater courage and strength to follow its teaching and to obey its demands.

By conforming our life to the law governing all life, all love, we become at one with the law, and only good can come from such union.

Rejuvenation, hope, calm determination to face life's problems undaunted and unafraid are the outcome of this psychic or spiritual exercise. And without this, the world's responsibilities and burdens would crush all meaning out of life. Otherwise, the only other alternative, would be to cast aside all responsibility, and as does the butterfly, flit from flower to flower until the winter of old age or death ends all.

We Believe In Prayer

W. Douglas Mackenzie
Hartford Foundation

IT IS a fact that prayer is universal. Even the most primitive peoples that can be found try to keep in touch with the unseen power or powers that control their life. It is a spontaneous action of human nature. Therefore I must pray or refuse to share in this great human endeavor.

2. It is a fact that the highest and purest teachers of the race have practised prayer. The noblest literatures of the world are filled with this most glorious exercise of our native powers of heart and mind. They illustrate the deep, irrepressible urge which drives men to the almighty and the living joy which is attained in conscious and deliberate intercourse with the Eternal. Therefore I must pray, if I too would share even in small measure the highest experiences of the noblest of my race.

3. It is a fact that Jesus Christ lived with His Father, and taught His disciples so to live, in open intimate conversation. If He is my

Master I must pray. I cannot profess to admire, still less to worship, Him if I refuse to "seek" and "ask" and "knock" as He urges all who would fulfill their destiny as sons of God.

4. It is a fact that prayer is answered abundantly and in infinitely varied ways. No people who have practised prayer faithfully and rightly have any doubt of this. They know that God has come to them in prayer. They know that He has come in outward answers to prayer, thousands and myriads of times in the history especially of Christian prayers. The mathematical probabilities are all against the theory that these answers are mere chance coincidences. Therefore, as one who has already prayed for many long years and has known alike the personal influence of prayer and the strange, often startling phenomena of "answers to prayer," I must go on to the end in its practice.

5. For it is a supreme fact that habitual, sincere, confident intercourse with God is one

of the conditions through which the Creator Spirit is working out the destiny of mankind and fulfilling His own eternal purpose of love.

William T. Manning

Bishop of New York

PRAYER is the highest and the most natural action of the human soul.

Prayer is not a matter of theory. It is one of the universal facts of human experience. We are brought to prayer not by argument but by the normal impulse of our own souls. Because we are God's children we lift up our hearts to Him in obedience to the instinct which He has implanted in us.

Prayer is the action of a normal, human, life. It is the life without prayer which is abnormal and which needs to be explained.

Prayer includes petition, definite requests for things that we desire. There is no limit to the

power, or the love, of Him to Whom we pray. He is Almighty. He is just as able to give us health, or success in our work, or any earthly blessing, as to give us faith, or purity, or peace of soul. Nothing is too great, or too small, for us to ask of Him if we ask it in a right spirit.

We may ask whatever we will of Him but it does not follow that He will see fit to give us what we desire. We know that it may be right for our petitions to be refused. Every true Christian prayer includes, implicitly or expressly, the words "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done."

Prayer includes petition, but it is vastly more than this. It includes also adoration, aspiration, confession and communion. It includes all that the soul feels and desires to express in its relationship with God. It is not always necessary that our prayers should be expressed in words.

Some of our truest moments of prayer are those in which we simply feel that we are with God. Prayer is a far deeper thing than words.

It its the act by which we come consciously into the Divine Presence. It is the movement of the soul in fellowship with the Divine Father. It is the holy place of meeting between God and ourselves.

Prayer brings us blessings both direct and indirect. Apart from the direct answers which we receive it produces other great moral and spiritual results in our lives and characters. Prayer gives to our lives serenity, self control, courage, unselfishness, cheerfulness. It gives us strength spiritual, mental and physical.

The well known facts as to bodily healing in answer to prayer are only what, as Christians, we ought confidently to expect, for prayer brings us into contact with the source of all life and strength.

We ought to rise from our knees strengthened in body, mind and spirit, with hearts and souls refreshed, with new power to meet all the tasks and opportunities of life. Now as of old those who truly pray will come down from the mountain of God's Presence with

something of the Divine light and gladness shining about them.

But we must not expect to know the power of prayer without effort. The power of prayer, like our other powers and faculties must be developed by practise and use. In public and in private our prayer and worship must be a reality. We must take trouble about it. We must give to our prayers the same thought and care and effort that we give to any other serious business of our lives.

Daniel L. Marsh

President of Boston University

I BELIEVE in prayer. I pray as I breathe—naturally. I pray because I must. To explain why I pray would to me be as unnecessary or as absurd as to tell why I delight in communion with my closest and most sustaining friend, or why I enjoy exalted friendship of any kind. I regard the spiritual self with its capacities and impulses as the highest part of my nature,

and prayer seems to be the natural expression of that better self. Prayer clarifies my mind, strengthens my will, gives poise and calm to my spirit, makes my most difficult tasks sacramental, enriches my joy, and sanctifies my sorrow. Since I have tried it out and have learned by experience that this is so, would I not stultify myself if I did not gladly acknowledge my belief in the value of prayer?

SAMUEL MAUGER

Melbourne, Australia

YES, I believe in Prayer by which even physical things may be effected; that the disordered brain may be calmed and the ailing body benefited. No arrogant scientific theory has a right to confine within a given restricted area the range of the God-given spirit. We have but touched the fringe of Nature's laws, we are but on the outskirts of the suburbs of the city of Truth. No power can evade or overthrow the known laws of the Universe, raise the dead

to life, or liberate us from the consequences of sin. Such things as these, Prayer cannot do—was never meant to do. Yet prayer may still convey the enlightening message to the darkened life, the erring soul, through the medium of laws unplumbed and unimagined, revive the sad and liberate the enslaved, if we pray in purity, in love. Fundamentally the power of our prayer will depend on the purity and beauty of our life. It is the spiritual quality of the personality that prays. Patience and search for truth? Yes, Prayer involves all this, yet transcends it as the Sun transcends the light of the earth.

Every virtue, faith, hope, love, truth, must be cultivated to the highest, that the best and sweetest self may become the medium through which our Prayers are poured and by the mystery of the Divine law, the means of mercy and healing to those that weep in the days of their desolation. It needs a perfect man to frame a perfect prayer. We need to commune with God in prayer. We shall win thereby added strength, a nobler faith, a more glorious

hope, but we must always remember that the function of Prayer is primarily to give, not to receive.

Through Prayer we may purify our own inward natures; we may set in motion the hidden laws of life whereby the hearts of men are healed; we may send forth magic waves of sympathy and love whose final resting-place may be in some wounded body and some sin-stained breast. You cannot measure the height nor depth nor infinite power of Prayer. Pray for the sick, the lonely, the sad, the erring, the bereaved, the dying; pray for all men, and in the sacred sacrifice of such a prayer your heart shall be satisfied and your spirit be at peace. Finally, the quality of your Prayer will be the measure of the quality of your life for, from the ideal harmony of the pure, fully-developed body, mind and spirit, is born ideal Prayer.

Pray that you may love, and love that you may pray, until your life and the life of humanity shall become one perfect incarnate Prayer.

We Believe In Prayer

CLELAND B. MCAFEE

Moderator, Presbyterian Assembly

MY OWN belief in prayer covers a very full definition of the term. I do not distinguish between prayer of meditation and prayer of petition. Nor do I eliminate prayer regarding external things from my belief. The whole belief rests on assurance of the moral and personal nature of God. It is of the same order as communication between persons on the purely human level. A personal God can operate in the order of things as freely as any other person. It does not overturn the order of nature for me to ask a student of mine to do something which would never be done in the regular order of natural processes. He does it in response to my desire. It is always in line with natural laws, but so are answers to prayer.

Of course, for me as for every Christian, the larger meaning of prayer is in its opportunity for fellowship with One who is able and willing to share burdens and programs of life.

As a man cannot carry on his own life without relation to God, so God does not carry out His world program without relation to men like ourselves. Prayer is the most natural way in which we enter into this sharing. We give over our burdens in the very sense of laying them before such a Father as Christ shows God to be, and we receive from Him our part of the total burden which is being borne for the good of humanity. It would seem impossible to have the ideas of Jesus and not believe that prayer is a real possibility in such an order as this. Turning that possibility into an experience simply underscores the argument.

WILLIAM FRASER MCDOWELL

Methodist Bishop, Washington, D. C.

PRAYER is so personal a thing, so intimately, sacredly personal at its best, that one shrinks from public statements about it as he

does from laying bare the innermost relations of a holy friendship. Just because of its character and significance to a man's deepest life, he makes everything of it but does not find it easy to speak of it.

I think we must make our philosophy of prayer and base our practice upon what it evidently meant to Jesus. Evidently to Him it was an intensely personal matter. *"I* know that *thou* hearest *me."* And evidently also Jesus regarded prayer as both normal and vital to his own life. The essence of it in His life as far as we can see appears to lie in that intimate, personal, communion into whose depths we cannot look, which we can only imagine. We cannot see or know what passed between the Father and the Son in those whole nights or briefer periods. But following Jesus' example and practice we can get experiences of our own that awe our hearts, exalt our spirits and make us walk softly and humbly in the world.

Would it be an utter impropriety for me to

say that for long years now the fact that makes prayer a real and not a formal exercise, that gives it value beyond words, is that I think of it as, and find it to be, a personal communion with the Christlike God? This determines what I shall ask and refrain from asking, what I shall say and what I shall refrain from saying, what I shall expect and not expect, what I shall seek and what refrain from seeking. And in all private praying it determines the proportion between speech and silence, between utterance and waiting in solemn listening, between trying to influence God and being influenced by Him. The Christlike God makes all the difference in the world in the meaning of prayer. But the dreadful truth is that I do not make anywhere near enough of the fact that God is the kind of person He is. Jesus did make enough of it, and evidently found it good for His life.

And praying for others was clearly one of His ways of doing good to them. He probably prayed far more for others than for Him-

self. This, too, he found good—both for them and for Himself. He did enough of that. Really one is hushed and humbled in the presence of His perfect habits of prayer for Himself and other people. He evidently knew how many wonderful things are wrought by prayer. I think we must base our philosophy and practice of prayer upon Jesus' use of it and manifest experience of its value.

FRANCIS J. MCCONNELL

Methodist Bishop, New York

SOMETIMES the truths of which we are most certain are those most hard to state. I am always afraid to make any claims for what I think prayer does for me personally, for I fear that the consequences in me will not seem especially important to others. I will say, then, that I have seen men increase in moral strength and in richness and fullness of life who have practiced the prayer experience.

I believe that the source of the strength which they reach in prayer is itself strong. I cannot believe that anything which gives men larger hold on truth is itself false, or that anything which creates force is itself without relation to the center of force. The test of prayer is the total effect in the man who prays. I have seen too much of such total effect to have much doubt about the efficacy of prayer.

PAUL D. MOODY

President of Middlebury College

I BELIEVE in prayer from experience. Some of my friends feel that it is wrong not to put a higher objective value on prayer than I do. I may when I have exhausted the subjective value. But to take into God's presence the things which puzzle me and burden me and there to see them in a new light and my own relation to them is all I want. I dare not ask

God to alter his plans or purposes, but I do ask to be brought into alignment with them.

With F. W. Robertson prayer does not mean a bending down of the power of God to my desires or plans but a lifting of my desires and plans up to the plane of the Divine Will. In His presence, injuries I have received seem small, wrongs I have committed seem great. If, as I believe, He is all wise and all seeing, I cannot suggest anything to Him but I can say "Thy Kingdom Come and Thy Will be done in me and by me as it is in heaven."

And with the influence of prayer upon me it becomes impertinent not to work with redoubled energy for the things I believe are a part of His Kingdom. From this position I may go on to ask Him to do things, but I doubt it. I do try to imagine how His plans can be carried out and often it has raised me from my knees to write a letter or to do something; and I do not think it is imagination that I do it with more interest and understanding and, I hope, success.

We Believe In Prayer

JULIAN MORGENSTERN
Hebrew Union College

FIRST, let me say that I do believe in prayer, not however as those who speak of the "efficacy of prayer."

The question of the efficacy of prayer is a relic of primitive religion. Primitive man pictured his deity or deities for the most part in human form like his own. Between these deities and himself and his group, he conceived of a personal relation existing. This personal relationship expressed itself in a mutual obligation. To primitive man something of a magical force was inherent in prayer, in that it compelled, or at least induced, the deity to function properly. An impotent deity might well be discarded in favor of some new, more powerful, more pliable deity. Such was primitive religion.

Men still conceive of God in a practical way as that supernatural power whose chief, if not sole, business it is to grant them the things for which they pray. "Is prayer worth while;

does it work; does it get results?" sums up the matter quite practically. "If it gets results, I believe in it; if not, it is unefficacious and a foolish waste of time." The popular concept and practical application of religion is still not far removed from the primitive, our boasted twentieth century civilization to the contrary notwithstanding.

Obviously there is a fallacy somewhere. And it lies just in this, that the little, finite mind of puny man attempts to grasp and measure and describe infinity, eternity, universe, God, in terms of its own finitude.

The ancient Jewish sages were wise indeed when they declared that God can be described by man truly only in negatives, by what He is not. All that I may affirm with certainty about God is that He is. But what He is, how He functions and with what full, definite purposes, whether and how and to what extent He answers men's prayers, that we cannot know.

But knowing that God is, I feel too that He is wise and good and loving. Infinite though

He be, I feel Him close at all times. I know that He is my Friend, my loving, true, unselfish Friend, who needs me far less than I need Him. And with my close, unfailing Friend I converse, I commune. I may supplicate Him, particularly in my hours of weakness and need; but if my petition be not granted, it does not shake my faith in my Friend, nor raise in my mind the questions whether it is efficacious to petition Him or whether He has the power to grant my petition. I would pour out my heart to Him and ask wherein does my weakness lie and wherein have I fallen short; and asking Him this question, I find the answer sure and true, and I turn again to my work with new understanding and strength and courage and assurance of ultimate success. In my moments of achievement there comes to me, from joyous communion with Him, the realization that this achievement, however it may seem to me, is not the end; that more and greater work lies ahead, and the goal is still far off. In grief, and loneliness, and suffering I would feel my Friend nigh, His mere presence cheering and

strengthening me; and in my gladness and enjoyment of the precious things of life I would feel that these are the gifts and bounties of my Friend, given generously and for my need and pleasure even though I may not have prayed for them. I conceive of God, not as a king or lord or patron, who grants or withholds prayers and petitions; not even merely as a stern, righteous judge, who rewards or punishes unerringly. I conceive of Him as my Friend and the Friend of all my fellowmen. With this Friend I would commune at all times and in every possible way.

Therefore I believe in prayer. Therefore I pray.

A PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS

By Augustus T. Murray

Friends Meeting House, Washington, D. C.

Thou Lord and Father of us all, we pray Thee that at this blessed season Thou wilt fill our hearts with

love and gratitude to Thee for all Thy good gifts to men. We thank Thee for life and for the joys of life; we thank Thee for such measure of health and strength as may have been vouchsafed us; but above all we thank Thee for Thy manifold revelations of Thyself, and that we, the human children, can know the blessedness of communion with Thee.

Open Thou our minds, we pray Thee, to the full meaning of Christmas, and let the spirit of the Lord Christ dwell in us, to the end that in forgetfulness of self we may know the joy of sharing in the lives of others.

Draw near with comfort and with peace, we beseech Thee, to all those in sorrow and distress, and quicken in those more blest with the good things of life the will to succor those in need.

Grant us grace, O Lord, to find Thee in all the experiences of life, whether of seeming good or ill, and in all things to walk worthily of our calling as followers of Him who went about doing good. It is in His name that we make our prayer. Amen.

We Believe In Prayer

H. B. NEWELL

Korea

I BELIEVE in prayer:

1. Because I was brought up by praying parents (for which I thank God); and because in adult experience I have found no other exercise so helpful for self-discipline, for giving spiritual strength, and for giving calmness and poise in time of stress and crisis.

2. Because I find in man an instinct to pray. To no race of men is the idea of prayer foreign. President Lincoln in the White House prayed because he "had nowhere else to go for sustaining power." The Japanese fisherman whom we picked up far out at sea, clinging for three days to the wreckage of his boat replied to an inquiry, "Oh, Sir, we could do nothing but pray."

3. Because there is an influence in prayer. This is both subjective and objective. To him who prays there comes self-mastery, strength and comfort. To the one prayed for there comes an influence for good. In youth I was

consciously influenced by the knowledge that my parents were praying for me. I know others who were kept from gross conduct by the thought of a mother's prayers. I have a Japanese friend, formerly a Tokyo policeman, now a preacher and social service worker. He made this change under the influence of the audible prayers of a church pastor in his study at night, and which he listened in on standing outside by the window.

4. Because prayer is answered. Not always according to the petition, nor according to the volume of the prayer. The Moral Ruler of the Universe has a moral purpose, and the petitioner's attitude must be one of harmony with this purpose. Prayer is a moral, not a mathematical exercise. It is not the quantity, but the quality that counts, otherwise beads and prayer wheels would be the winners. And as the prayer, so the answer, it must be in harmony with the great moral purpose of God, otherwise anarchy would result. I believe, therefore, that a great benefit of prayer is that it puts one's heart into harmony with Him

whom Jesus revealed as Heavenly Father, and enables him to rise to that spiritual height which Jesus himself attained when he prayed, "Father, not my will but thine be done."

A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO PRAY

By Joseph Fort Newton

Philadelphia

O GOD Eternal, who art the inspiration of prayer and its answer, hear our prayer for all who seek Thee in the darkness of the world and the mists of the mind, lifting up hands in prayer. Thou knowest how many hearts are bowed even when heads are erect, some praying in joy, some in sorrow, some in cold despair, but all praying, if it be only in the wish that they could pray. Thy mercy on Thy people, Lord, who love Thee better than they know, and even in their doubts will not give Thee up.

Before Thee, O God, is our bitter human need; teach us how to pray, asking not for things but for Thyself; not begging Thee to do something for us, but beseeching Thee to do something in us. Show us, our Father, that all that we can ask or think or dream is

already our own, when we are willing and worthy to receive it. Unite us in the fellowship of Thy holy will, each praying for all, and all for each one, and may none ask ought for himself that he does not ask for all his fellow souls.

Too little have we sought Thee, O God; too long have we struggled and stumbled alone, when Thou art near and eager to help. Forgive our blindness and neglect, and open in the hearts of men everywhere a fountain of prayer, that Thy way may be known upon earth and Thy work done. Thou Balm for our woes, Thou Answerer of our cries, lift our humanity out of bigotry into brotherhood, out of the shadow of fear into the light and love and power of the Truth; we ask in Thy Holy Name. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO PREACH

By Albert W. Palmer

President, Chicago Theological Seminary

WE lift our prayer to thee, O God, for those who preach. May it be no shallow easy preaching that they do. May they love humanity but not be easily content with themselves or with the age in which they

live. As they face sorrow, sin and tragedy, drive them to search the great deeps for a nobler message. Bring them unto thy presence through the experience of life until, beyond this clamorous outer world, they walk with unhurried steps that inner world of perfect beauty and spiritual values where thou canst speak to them. Bring them also very close to Christ outdoors beneath the trees within the olive garden until the glory of temple courts and cheering crowds has died away and they crave no applause but thine. And then, O God, send them forth to preach as prophets of a brotherhood beyond all races and all nations, and as priests of a divine presence whose altar flame shall never fail while truth and love endure. Make them brave, because thou hast entrusted to them the comfort of thy people and they must not fail; but make them also very humble and unassuming because they are but channels of thy truth. So send them forth in Jesus' name. Amen.

Daniel A. Poling

President, World Christian Endeavor Union

I BELIEVE in prayer because a personal God would inevitably wish personal contact with

His children. Prayer is the attempt, the successful attempt, to realize the Divine presence.

I believe in prayer because the great leaders, those whose thought I delight to follow, prayed. It is difficult to name a supreme figure of these centuries of the Christian Era who did not pray. Jesus taught His followers to pray and He Himself prayed.

I believe in prayer because prayer has produced results. Although some may say, "There is nothing in it," this means at the most that they have found no returns. In the same way the blind man may say, "I see no mountain"—but there is a mountain. The unsuccessful prospector may declare, "The stream holds no gold"—but there is gold. Jesus Christ got results! Abraham Lincoln got results! My mother got results!

I believe in prayer because I accept as trustworthy the testimony of those in whom I have confidence.

I believe in prayer because I have found it true, because I have experienced its power.

I believe in prayer because, whatever a man's

estate, prayer will enrich his life, give him a finer, truer character, a surer hold upon his career, a poise and a peace for sorrow, a confidence in difficulty, and a growing, abiding conviction of God—His reality, His personality and at last the unquenchable hope of immortality.

Prayer for me has never stopped the sun. Prayer for me has never changed God; but it has done more—it has changed me.

Henry Hugh Proctor

Brooklyn

THERE are many elements in prayer, but asking includes them all. In the model prayer there are seven petitions. The great Teacher commanded us to ask, and assured us we should receive.

Prayer moves on three levels. The first is that of man asking man. How poor our lives

would be did we not ask the help of others. Our lives are enriched in proportion to our wisdom in asking.

But prayer runs not alone on the level of man to man. How poverty-stricken our lives would be did we only avail ourselves of that man can do! Not only does prayer move on the level of man asking man and of man asking God; but also on that of God asking man. Clearly, God prays to man! Is the Bible not full of the prayers of God to man? The living Christ is an eternal prayer. This uplifted Figure ever says "Come."

In this threefold scope I find the triangle of prayer complete. In the base of the triangle where man asks man, I find the proof of the reality of prayer. In the right lateral where man asks God, I find the proof of the value of prayer. In the left lateral of the triangle, where God asks man, I find the proof of the need of prayer, as I respond to the challenge of the Eternal. Thus in the simplicity of asking do I find the reality, value and need of prayer coöperating. Here, too, are combined

adoration, confession and gratitude, without which there would be no true asking.

Thus stated, I believe in prayer with all my heart. This is no substitute for work but the preparation for it. It is not begging for things, but the expression of an unbroken fellowship with God and man. In it I live and move and have my being. I must ask man. Thereby come education, information, coöperation, companionship—progress! I must ask God. Have I not received forgiveness, restoration, inspiration, illumination—life?

But I must answer if I expect to receive. I am a center of prayer as well as a maker of prayer. I must answer man if I expect man to answer me. I must play the game of life. I must answer God if I expect God to answer me. Standing between God and man I must answer man and I must answer God. One is a corrective of the other. The higher is the ideal of the lower. I find, then, the key to all prayer. It lies at the foot of Gethsemane. "They will be done." And it is all covered with blood!

We Believe In Prayer

A. RIVETT

Sydney, Australia

PRAYER is something to be realized rather than related. Prayer is often futile. For instance here in Australia, Government recently arranged with the Churches that the Almighty be invoked to override the ordered mechanism of nature, by sending rain into those districts where the conditions for rain are non-existent. Prayer is often a guise for indolence, as when the Unseen is asked to do for men, what men can do for themselves. A conference of farmers in Sydney was assured by a minister of Religion, that if the farmers grew more cereals, "God would find the markets."

And how often prayer—or rather the form of prayer—is a weariness to the flesh, as when the occupant of the pulpit, in the "long" prayer, covers the whole gamut of existence, giving the impression that men will be heard for their "much speaking." Other prayers are fruitless, because nothing being looked for as the result, nothing comes.

Much prayer however is real, and perhaps more than we surmise. Prayer is an innate necessity of human nature. Christ's attitude to prayer may ever be our guide. He did not command prayer, yet ever exercised himself in it. Prayer was to him the effective dynamic of his ministry. He sought to bring himself into alignment with the will of God. In its highest reaches prayer with Christ was primarily a matter of communion and assimilation rather than petition. Every man who has sought seriously to understand this secret strength of the Christ-life, has also learned the potency of prayer. With such there have been times—crises in thought and experience —when prayer was the one steadying force.

One is asked: "What is the deepest prayer of your heart for the Age?" It is this: that organized Christianity, laying aside much of its deck-hamper, may have the illumination, and the courage, and the purpose to get right at the heart and inwardness of the social, ethical, and spiritual implications of Christ's Teaching, and without reservation, or fear

of consequences, proceed with holy abandon, to apply them to the wrongs and injustices of present-day social, economic, and industrial conditions.

MYSTERIUM TREMENDUM

By Howard Chandler Robbins

BE not so easy-going, good my friend,
In summoning to prayer! We know the day
Is fine, but doth not He who made the way
By which light travels, and of old doth send
Rain on the just and unjust? Wherefore bend
Thy knees in greater dread, more humbly pray
For mercy and for blessing, lest thou stay
By thine own littleness His boundless end.

Be still, and know thy God, before whom choirs
Angelic wait in silence, till they fill
Their longing eyes with bliss. His end for thee
Is grace, but the dread grace of God requires
A mind attentive to His majesty,
A heart that wonders, worships, and is still.

We Believe In Prayer

RICHARD ROBERTS

Toronto

I DO not believe that the world we see is all the world there is. I do not believe that the Reality which is accessible to our five or so little, inadequate senses and our clumsy reasoning faculty is the whole of Reality. The greater part of life is out of sight. Round about us "like a bursting sea," there is a world of living Reality to which we are yet strangers. We have, it is true, "heard a rumor thereof"; and we have a dim flickering sense that the "yonder-world" is calling us. Man is blessed (or cursed, just as you choose to put it) with a homesickness for a hidden fatherland. He is haunted by a nostalgia for "a better country, that is, an heavenly."

In prayer, this nostalgia tries to make itself articulate. In prayer, we are signaling our unknown fatherland. We are doing even more. Prayer is the means by which we wear down the opaque walls of sense, and now and again, albeit very dimly, see some of the sights

and hear some of the sounds of the "better country." We are still infants in the business of prayer, and even yet suppose it to be an affair of presenting wants to God. But the act of prayer is a greater and a more momentous business than the manner or the matter of prayer. Under what form or for what boon so ever we pray, our prayer is "a flight after the unattainable." When we pray, we are taking the road of destiny. It is the greatest and most daring thing that mortal man can do. I believe in it.

J. Elliot Ross

University of Iowa

PRAYER is many things. According to a phrase of the Apostles' Creed, it is the communion of saints. Prayer is the bridge from this world to the next, it is the hand that stretches across time into eternity to unite the living and the dead.

Sometimes prayer is a cry of anguish when all human help has failed, when we are overwhelmed with the difficulties and sorrows of life. Sometimes prayer is an anchor of hope to which we cling amid the perplexities and doubts of existence, when life itself seems hardly worth living, and the temptation seizes upon us to end it all with a bare bodkin.

But most of all, prayer is a stretching of the soul, a tiptoe to catch a glimpse of God, to gain some experiential knowledge of the Source of all. And in the midst of a materialistic society, one needs to exercise and strengthen this faculty to apprehend the supernatural; just as in a world jazzed up to æsthetic vulgarities one needs to cultivate one's power to hear the harmonies of Beethoven, to see the chaste beauties of a Greek temple.

Face to face with a mechanistic philosophy that would reduce everything to chemistry and physics, that would destroy all human personality in the bog of determinism, that would dwarf man into insignificance before an eternal and infinite universe of stars, one needs prayer

to keep one's self-respect, to see a meaning in life, to make anyone's actions matter by being brought into free relationship with a personal God.

To the prayful man there is more than a blind process of evolution, more than Nature with a capital "N"—there is an intelligent personality knowing his every action, and loving him with an affection that makes his slightest action of moment. Prayer keeps one's spiritual faculties from atrophying, so that in the day of trial one can tap the springs of supernatural power, and face life not only with a Stoic's unflinchingness, but with a divine elan.

ELBERT RUSSELL

Duke University

FUNDAMENTALLY I believe in prayer because I find it a vitally helpful experience. By prayer I mean communion with God rather than begging things from Him. Too many

think of prayer chiefly as a device for using the Infinite Arm to secure things which human arms are too short to reach. Nevertheless it is natural for us to come to God with our interests and needs. We need not set limits to His power. He is not a slave to "natural laws." We do not know enough about His laws to set limits beforehand to what He can do. We can trust Him not to do anything evil; anything that is not for our good or the good of the world. We may be sure that he will not put the world to physical or mental confusion at our request. But we can learn His will by what He refuses as well as by what he gives. Asking and thanksgiving give God the opportunity to "give Himself with His gifts."

It is mostly concerning spiritual needs that men need to pray; for deliverance from temptation; for forgiveness; for discernment of good and evil; for courage to do our duty; for sensitiveness to others' needs and pain; for love even toward enemies, awareness of new opportunities and instruments of service; and for keenness of spiritual vision.

But it is prayer as communion that is most vital and real. The attempt to tell a difficulty to a friend often helps clear it up. In counsel with our friends our problems find solution. So also we come from communion with God,—with new strength, courage, and faith. Difficult problems may still be unsolved but they do not seem so important. Old obstacles are there, but they no longer seem insuperable. Duties are still hard but we have the needed strength. We feel that with God all things are possible and that life is joyous and good.

I believe in prayer because I believe in God. It is a good working hypothesis, verifiable in satisfactory experience.

HENRY NORRIS RUSSELL

Princeton University

THE theoretical and practical sides of religion meet in the question of prayer. Prayer is common to practically all forms of religion

—but, is it reasonable? What is the sense of praying, if all things are immutably predetermined—whether by the mechanism of Nature or the will of God?

This question is asked often enough: and perhaps the most striking thing about it is the extremely limited and primitive view of religion and of prayer that usually shows through it. Prayer includes adoration, thanksgiving, confession of sin, and petition. Only one of these elements usurps popular attention, and this is the last, the only one that may contain a selfish element.

That prayer and petition should be synonymous in so many minds is a sad comment on the general state of religious discernment; but, when it comes to the consideration of intellectual difficulties, petition is the only phase of prayer which raises them.

At first sight these difficulties appear very serious, but upon analysis they turn out to be relatively unimportant. God Almighty is the only being to whom we attribute complete metaphysical freedom, or whom, at least, we

may suppose to be conditioned only by His own nature, and not by anything external to Himself—and the only one whom we may believe to have a complete and perfect understanding of our own words and thoughts. When this is realized, it appears that it is more obviously reasonable to pray to God for some specific thing than to make the most trivial request of our neighbor, for in the latter case the whole problem of the nature of human freedom of choice and action comes in.

Having reason to believe that the Divine design of the universe has already been determined, how can prayer alter what has already happened? This might be an insuperable difficulty if we did not believe in a transcendent God—outside our limitation of time as well as of space—but, with this belief the complication vanishes. For on God's side of the matter our distinctions of before and after are not inevitable—indeed, not present at all.

I do not think that prayer about minor things is discouraged—not if we believe in a God. When, how much, and for what we

should pray, and what things we should leave to God's consideration without asking specially for it, no one can indicate. Religious experience—the unfailing experimental test, must be our guide. We may well remember the last couplet of Hartley Coleridge's great sonnet:

> But if for any wish thou dar'st not pray,
> Then pray to God to take that wish away.

HEMCHANDRA SARKAR

Chief Minister of The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj
India

PRAYER is the corner-stone of the religion of the Brahmo Samaj. The Bramo Samaj do not believe in a God who has created the universe and then rests in some corner of it, nor in a God who administers the creation according to some appointed laws. We believe in a living providence who knows our needs, listens to the cries of the heart, and fulfills our just

and earnest prayer. Answer to prayer is as scientific as the fact that oxygen and hydrogen mixed in a certain proportion produce water. It is a fact of universal experience. Good and true men in all ages and climes have found solace and strength in prayer. It has been found that in some mysterious way the earnest prayers of the human heart are often, if not always, answered. It may not be possible to explain the philosophy of prayer; but it is an unquestionable fact of experience, and science and philosophy must take cognizance of it.

The fact that prayers are not always fulfilled does not affect the reality of prayer. Prayer like all natural events has its conditions. Prayer to be efficacious must fulfill these conditions. True prayer is not the idle man's device of getting his work done by God. Real prayer is the earnest resignation to the providence of God after one has done all he could. Prayer is not the words uttered by the lips, but an attitude of the mind. When a man after making utmost exertions looks up to God in helplessness for strength and guidance, that is

true prayer. If such a prayer is not fulfilled we should understand that God has some better plans.

JOHN NEVIN SAYRE

New York

PRAYER to me is like a window which opens out on a wide space of sea, sky and mountains. When I open this window and gaze afar, I see the things of earth in truer proportions and the breath of a great outdoors sweeps in and invigorates my spirit which often is too close confined. Prayer also is conversation with my best and ultimate Friend. I talk out my troubles and desires with Him and listen for a reply in the feelings of my heart and best judgment of my mind. There is also petition with Him for those I love, both on earth and beyond.

I am rather irregular in my praying, just as I am in taking physical exercise and much else.

The moral reënforcement which I get through prayer varies considerably. I find it best to change my ways of praying just as I like to find new roads when I am out walking. Sometimes I use spoken prayer, sometimes silent, sometimes in Church, sometimes in my room, or on a train, or listening to music, or walking in the hills.

Usually prayer means most to me when I am in trouble or difficulty. It is a reserve resource on which I depend, and without it, I should feel my life seriously crippled.

VIDA D. SCUDDER

Wellesley College

I BELIEVE in prayer:

First, because Jesus did and I think He knew; and because He taught us how to pray. Then, because prayer seems so reasonable to me. I find the frequent remark that one can-

not expect to change God's will by praying, quite irrelevant. The energetic achievements of men enter within the Divine Will. Nature is an entirely different thing when man has passed by, and the jungle yields to the garden; man makes history. Why cannot prayer exercise creative force as well as any other kind of effort? Because it functions invisibly? That is nonsense. The most potent forces are always invisible; matter grows diaphanous to modern science, and the dynamic power of pure thought, always recognized by the East, becomes more compellingly realized day by day.

I think desire is the strongest force in the world; it is desire that shapes empires, molds characters, alters the course of events. Human desires degrade and stifle, they inspirit and they heal. And surely they are never so dynamic as when uplifted into unison with the Source of all power, the Mind of the Most High. God invites our coöperation in carrying out His purposes, that is all there is about it.

And a man no more runs up against a fixed order of events when he prays than when he builds a bridge. God intends him to build that bridge; and He intends us if we choose, to deflect circumstance by prayer focussed on His power and united to it by faith.

Prayer is an energy as real as the energy that binds the planets to the sun. And if this is true, it is a solemn responsibility. The prayerless life evades a primary duty, and no one however obscure and humble, can be excused from his share in shaping the destines of the world. The purification of the spirit and its concentration on the noblest ends is far more important than anything we do on the external plane.

Real praying is not easy. A casual uplifting of the heart when the impulse comes, or need is great, or the sunset glorious, is all very well; and for busy people withheld from the long praying common in the East and well-known to our devout forbears, I think the habit of constant ejaculatory prayer invaluable and soul-

saving. But we know that the masters of the spiritual life have taken prayer very differently from that. Prayer is no languid perfunctory matter, but a sharp discipline. Jesus continued all night in prayer to God. Prayer is an art and a science and there are plenty of competent guides to its mysteries, from the Yogis of the East to St. Theresa.

As for prayer for personal ends, I suppose the finer we are the more subordinate it will grow. Our desires are the test of us and it would be a sad thing to be self-centered before the Throne of God. The Lord's Prayer gives us the true sequence for our desires. "Hallowed be Thy Name"—may our idea of God, our conception of the highest reality, be purified and exalted more and more. That is what men need more than anything else,—to think rightly of God. Then: "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, as in Heaven, so on earth," —the passionate aspiration toward the Christian Utopia, toward the right social ideal. Only then dare we ask, not each for himself, but all together, for "our" daily bread,—the

supply of the race's material needs. And the people who would convert the poor first and feed them afterward, may remember that the forgiveness of sins follows, not precedes, the daily bread. Deliver us from evil is the great summary; and this whole order of precedence in the Lord's Prayer is quite wonderful, and quite at variance with our natural instincts, which say: Feed me, forgive me, deliver me, very earnestly, and then perhaps put out languid desires, alas, alas, for the Coming of the Kingdom and the Hallowing of the Name. Deliver us from private-mindedness, dear Lord!

Meanwhile, petition is of course only the smallest part of praying. Confession, thanksgiving, adoration, all have their place in the interior world where alone we truly live. Adoration above all. As the years pass, we ask less, even for others; we worship more.

"O Jesus, Light of Eternal Glory, solace of the wandering soul: before Thee my lips have no speech, but my silence crieth to Thee."

We Believe In Prayer

ALLEN P. SHATFORD
Montreal, Canada

I BELIEVE in prayer because I believe in God. The reasonableness of prayer rests upon the character of God. According to the Christian interpretation His fundamental attribute is Love. All the difficulties of prayer are solved in the fatherly care of God.

2. *I believe in prayer because I believe in Man.* Man is the child of God, and must therefore hold communion with Him. No theory of man's origin can obscure the fact of man's inherent divinity. He is one with God, and prayer becomes the natural medium of communication. I believe in an instinct which is Universal—it is a guarantee that the response is somewhere.

3. *I believe in prayer because I believe in Law.* It is the reliability and uniformity of law that makes prayer possible. One could not long pray to a whimsical or capricious God who veers with the winds and changes with the

tides. My prayers are not to change God nor induce Him to violate His laws, but to so change myself as to make the operation of His laws fulfil His purpose in me.

4. *I believe in prayer because I have experienced its value.* I can no more doubt the value of prayer than I can the value of speech or desire. A thousand times I have had prayers answered and a thousand times denied. I know now that the denials were as true an answer as the acceptances. Sometimes the response has come in a form quite different from my desire, and I have learned how much better it was! I set no limits to the times and objects and methods of prayer. All my requests are made known to God—big and little, important or unimportant—and I do not worry about the answers. The best prayers are wordless—they are more spiritual and sincere. Communion is more than communication. The most intense prayers are born of extreme need —"being in agony He prayed yet more earnestly"—but I believe the most acceptable

prayers are those that come of a hunger for fellowship with God rather than those impelled by some crisis. The most fruitful prayers are those that result in God-likeness, when our constant communions with Him transfer us into His image. I believe that no sincere prayer ever goes wholly unanswered. I have never found prayer a difficult practise. It would be much more difficult for me not to pray. Among the forces that have made my life, prayer is the most potent.

CHARLES M. SHELDON

Topeka, Kansas

I BELIEVE in prayer because the best Person that ever lived, Jesus Christ, prayed and taught the world to pray.

I believe in it because I have received results from prayer that I could get in no other way. I have had direct answer to prayer in

times of distress that could have come from no other source except the divine presence.

I believe in prayer because it puts me into friendly relations with the Supreme Being, as nothing else does. I do not mean the too commonly accepted definition of prayer as begging God for something and getting it, but the practise of communion with the divine presence, without asking for anything, except the divine friendship. The lowest form of prayer is begging for favors. The highest is seeking companionship.

I believe in prayer because I have seen the results of prayers in the lives of very many other persons who have been comforted in time of sorrow, and helped over very hard places where money and power and earthly fame have been of no use to bring comfort and happiness. The proofs of prayer are so many that I cannot take time to name them. The best proof to me is the daily help I get from a personal knowledge that God cares and helps his children in every time of need.

We Believe In Prayer

S. Archibald Smith

Friends' Academy, Long Island

I BELIEVE in prayer because I need it. I need it because of my inadequacy, because of my weakness, my loneliness, and because of the mystery of life and death. I believe that life's final fact is not a material fact. I believe that there is a God and that I can get into real and effective relationship with Him. I do not overlook the dark unexplained facts of life; but I think of the ultimate reality in terms of the highest and the best.

Prayer's fulfillment is not a bending of the will of God; it is a revelation of the will of God and the bestowal of power to do it. Prayer helps me to develop spiritual vitality; it is a source of moral insight and renewal; it is an aid to my effort to overcome evil tendencies, ignorance, prejudice, and selfishness. Prayer is not a violation of law; it is fulfillment of the highest law.

We Believe In Prayer

ARTHUR H. SMITH

Sixty Years in China

WHILE the casual traveller is amused and interested by what is to be seen in non-Christian lands, the young missionary is rightly filled with awe. Who am I to expect to influence spiritually these unspiritual people? He feels —he must feel—the need of humble Prayer and confession. The strain of the new life, the terrors of a difficult language, his own weakness and incompetence come over him in ever-fresh waves, driving him to prayer, prayer, Prayer!

At times, in the democratic missionary gathering, unity of judgment upon an important missionary question may seem unattainable. On such occasions, united fervent prayer as "the great central act of worship" strikes a deep keynote. It is a clear recognition of our own shortcomings, perhaps leading to the almost obsolete practice of open confession of mistakes and faults, which may result in a shower of blessing on a whole group. In the

teaching of young Christians, in the training of leaders, in earnest efforts to revive or to reclaim those who have fallen into open or concealed sin, Prayer is often our only resource. United, earnest petition calms the spirit, restores the soul, releases new power. The prayer habit steadies and prepares one for anything and everything—even for ill news from a far country!

We are often surprised at the unbelievable results of Christian training even in the short space of one generation. Some of our best converts may be equal to the most advanced Western Christians; but this is to be credited not mainly to wise teaching but to the power of the living Christ in their own lives, and to unceasing Prayer. I *believe* in Prayer!

Is it not unaccountable that when Christians meet in social intercourse, spontaneous utterance of thanksgiving, praise and petition are so rare as to appear exotic, while they might well be as irrepressible as the joyous morning note of the meadow lark!

LORD TEACH US TO PRAY.

We Believe In Prayer

CLIFFORD P. SMITH

The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston

THE attitude of Christian Scientists towards prayer has been expressed by Mary Baker Eddy as follows: "I know that prayer brings the seeker into closer proximity with divine Love, and thus he finds what he seeks, the power of God to heal and to save." (Message to The Mother Church for 1901, p. 19.) For such reasons as these, Christian Scientists believe strongly in prayer.

Christian Science is distinct in teaching that prayer is governed by divine law. Divine Principle answers the prayer which accords with divine law, and answers it in accordance therewith. So, for effectual prayer, one should both comprehend and obey the divine requirements. One's thought should be characterized by spiritual understanding, and his daily life should be guided by this impartation from the divine Mind.

Christian Science is also distinct in teaching that prayer is always available for every good

purpose. It is available now and in every situation; it is no less available for health and protection than it is for other aspects of salvation. Prayer is coextensive with the bestowals of divine Love. It was Jesus who said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).

THEODORE GERALD SOARES

Chicago University

THE heart of my religion is the confidence that we human folk are not alone upon an inhospitable planet, but that the universe has personal quality, regardful of us, responsive to us. Our ethical emphasis on social values has cosmic foundation. Prayer is meditation upon this spiritual meaning of life. It is contemplation and affirmation of life's glory, worth, and opportunity. Ashamed that I have faltered in

my faith and forgotten my duty, prayer is an exercise of recovery.

As between my little wants and hopes and my great longings, prayer is the assessment of desire, giving recognition and expression to what is deepest. Prayer is an exercise of moral clarifying to the end that unworthy desires may be suppressed, and only the noblest may survive and be cherished. Prayer confirms these best desires by expressing them.

Religion has a certain childlike quality, as play and art have. Philosophy and science are mature, exacting in their definitions, but religion clothes its hopes in those imaginative forms which are most satisfying and delightsome. So prayer has naturally the intimate conversational character. We ask of the Father, we talk with the Friend, we seek counsel of the Teacher, we implore direction from the Guide. I find these personal forms entirely congenial in the mood of prayer, conscious the while that in other moods there are other approaches to reality.

I am in no wise disturbed by the psycholog-

ical recognition of prayer as autosuggestion. It enables me to feel how intimate, subtle, marvelous, is the impact of the Universal Spirit upon my own. That prayer is so evidently conversation with my other self is my assurance that I and my Father are one.

EMMA BAILEY SPEER

National Board, Y. W. C. A.

I BELIEVE in prayer because I believe in God; believe in Him as utterly loving and as the Maker of Heaven and earth. His creative processes are not finished and their progress depends upon our love and faith, our trust and obedience. Believing in a God who is all wisdom and all love, prayer becomes inevitable; not as asking for things, or even for help, but that one's finite spirit may try to become one with His infinite spirit. One prays in order that one may be near to God, just as children

like to be in company with their fathers and to learn from them. As one's hold on spiritual reality strengthens, prayer becomes the major part of life and the assurance grows that it is only one's blindness and lack of faith that keep one from a greater measure of light and power than comes within the reach of our ordinary thinking. It is because of "our averted faces" that He cannot give us more of His help, and show us more of His power and His glory.

ROBERT E. SPEER

New York

I BELIEVE in prayer because I believe in freedom. Prayer is as reasonable as free will which we know to be a reality. As Huxley wrote to Kingsley, prayer involves no more difficulty philosophically than free will. If all things are fixedly ordered, and there is no

freedom, then all human requests of friend to friend are absurd. But they are not absurd and it is just as reasonable to ask God to do something for us as it is to ask a friend to answer our letter.

I believe in prayer as part of the order of nature. Prayer is as much one of the forces included in God's universe as gravitation. It enters into all God's providence and government. We disrupt nature not by praying but by failing to pray. Unmeasured moral havoc has been wrought by prayerlessness just as by sin.

I believe in prayer in small things as well as in great. As a matter of fact we do not know what is small or what is great. Everything is of consequence in God's sight. As Ruskin says "We treat God with irreverence by banishing Him from our thoughts, not by referring to His will on slight occasions. His is not the finite authority or intelligence which cannot be trusted with small things. There is nothing so small but that we may honor God

by asking His guidance of it, or insult Him by taking it into our own hands."

And I believe in the reality of prayer not as communion only, but as a force for achieving results, for changing the course of events, and for influencing both God's will and men's wills. There is no reason to distrust the reality of the divine response and action because it seems natural and normal, for nature is God's.

ANNA GARLIN SPENCER

New York

I BELIEVE in Prayer: not as petition; not as a system of spiritual control of the ultimate "powers that be" that have made and are making our human life; not as any attempt to express in ceremonial form of words, at stated times in public service of worship; not as a part of creedal statement, or as an element in the formalization of philosophic thought; not

as the preservation of outgrown symbols of the religious life.

I believe in prayer as "the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed." I believe in prayer as the unfettered expression of the high moods of aspiration, of the deep affections, of the loneliness of defeat and the rapture of achievement, of the crisis-decisions of the personal life and of the ethical struggle toward perfection. In such moods and experiences, the single Person needs and must secure if possible a sense of universal companionship, a feeling "at one with whatsoever forces draw the ages on."

The Friends put it in this phrase, "Center down in the Quiet." Gannett expressed it in his admonition "now travel inward toward thy soul and listen by the way." The modern thinker gives permission for the sacred rite of the aspiring spirit when he says, "all high moods tend toward the personalization of the Infinite."

For this reason I believe in spoken prayer in the Church service, as the preservation, as in

all great literature, for reading in united meditation, of those high affirmations of great souls when they have felt most sure of the Realities of our mysterious existence and most near to the Heart of Things.

We should have not only the courage of our convictions, but the courage of our emotions. No literalist should deprive us of the wings of the spirit on which we rise to assurance of Truth, of Right, of Love and of Beauty,—that hath been, and are, and shall be forever more.

Ernest Milmore Stires

Bishop of Long Island

THE prayer that really avails comes from a persevering heart. When we begin to ask, sometimes we are not fit to have the thing we name. Can we keep on till God can grant it?

Does the request come from a heart grateful for what God has already done? I some-

times wish that for a time prayer might consist solely of that—gratitude for all that our Father has done and is doing. Along with the prayer, is there the pledge that we will use the thing granted as God would have it used? How can we ask answers to prayer, if we are not answering according to our power the prayers of others? So, when the question arises, "why is prayer not answered," let us ask, "do I really pray?"

Prayer keeps the spirit of man receptive, responsive to the spirit of God, just as sensitive receiving instruments are required for messages in our wireless world.

Prayer in the right spirit accomplishes the greatest things that can happen. As we pray, we cease to try to bring God to our way of thinking and let Him bring us to His way. It is a wonderful force to bring the soul face to face with duty. To pray is not easy. Who would expect that it would be an easy thing —the highest act of which a human being is capable, COMMUNION WITH ALMIGHTY GOD.

We Believe In Prayer

CHARLES STRONG
Australian Church, Melbourne

PRAYER, as I understand it, is the emotional expression (silent or vocal) of man's perception of relationship to the invisible beings that he believes surround him and influence his destiny, or to one great Being in Whom he "lives and moves and has his being."

There is evolution in the idea of prayer, according to the intellectual and spiritual level men and women may have reached in their conception of God and Man, and their relation to each other.

On the highest level, prayer is the willing throwing open of a human spirit's doors and windows, so to speak, and inviting God as the Spirit of Truth, Beauty, Love, to come and dwell in us and take possession of us: dedicating ourselves to the willing service of this God, as His sons and daughters, coöperators with Him in the evolution of humanity, including our own personalities. Hence *life* becomes a prayer.

Is not the highest prayer-ideal, whether private or social:—"Give, and it shall be given unto you"—"It is blessed rather to give than to receive?"

Such prayer thus always brings its own answer—even while the worshiper is yet speaking.

In such prayer, man rises above "nature," becomes conscious of his own dignity, and finds a deep bond of brotherhood, as Tennyson says, binding "with golden chains around the feet of God."

TRACY STRONG

World's Committee, Y. M. C. A., Geneva

DEAR SON:—

Your grandfather asked me to write on "Why I believe in prayer?" Instead of writing to him I'm going to write you because we've talked over this question together.

I believe in prayer because of my home and my father's home. Prayer has been an active force and helped me and the home spirit.

I believe in prayer because, in college, in my work, in international fellowship with boys, I discover my best and closest friends are those with whom I pray. Prayer has brought us together and we reveal our true selves to one another.

I believe in prayer because I know it to be a mighty force in maintaining wholesome relations between boys and girls and men and women. I've come to know enough boys and their experience along these lines to testify that prayer helps.

I believe in prayer because all around me, in the lives of men and women, in the beauties and grandeur of the mountains, in the reality and cleansing power of suffering, and even in the unexplainable, I see evidences of a God who is living and at work in his world. I want to come to know him—because *He* is more important than all his works. Prayer is one way of discovering him and one of the best ways. It is not a simple search, but it puts purpose and meaning into life. Just as you and the other children are difficult to know,

truly know, and understand, so also is God. When I catch occasional glimpses of your true self I feel rewarded for all the time and effort expended in trying to know you.

A friend recently said "God isn't necessary to help me shave, wash my face and take a bath, do my daily business transactions, or go to the movies. If that is the extent of my life God and prayer become unnecessary." Prayer becomes essential to me when I've lost in a great cause, facing a complex international problem in a boys' camp or attempting to advise a boy who has erred or lost out in life's struggle. Then God seems near.

I believe in prayer because of Jesus. He gave a Master Word for life. His nearness to God was his strength. He prayed. He revealed the heart of the kind of a God I believe in and want to come to know better. If he needed and was helped by prayer so am I.

Some other time we'll talk over the question about how and why I can believe, in the light of modern science, in Jesus' God.

As ever, DAD.

We Believe In Prayer

PHILIP ALLEN SWARTZ

Honolulu

PHILOSOPHY focuses upon Personality as the central fact. Science singles out Energy. Religion synthesizes both in pointing to a Creative Will, our Father. God is both Personality and Energy. What He is, what He does, what He wants me to be and to do, are my greatest thots.

I pray because I want to be like God. I pray because I must, because I cannot be like Him without His power. Prayer gathers up the unused forces within me and puts them to work. Thru prayer my life is so linked with the divine reserves of the universe that the horizon of my vision widens, and the field of my powers increases. By prayer the brambles of my life are uprooted and the good fruitage grows.

I pray because my friend needs help. He thrives with my good intent. Because of my prayer for him my life with him is nobler, truer, kindlier. Because of my prayer, he

receives fresh currents of spiritual power thru the unseen channels connecting humanity with deity.

I pray because human needs surpass man's compassion and are too great for man's powers. Prayer releases spiritual energies beyond my employ, which prepare the ground and plant the seeds for the harvests of good that God will grow and man will garner.

Prayer overleaps the wildest rifts and overcomes the most stubborn barriers. It unites the estranged, makes the bad man virtuous, the weak strong, the powerful Christlike. It is the language of the soul. Talk with God precedes and accompanies man's walk in the way of Christ. Prayer is the greatest achievement of the soul. For the spiritual life it is the index of vitality and the ever-present instrument of its activity.

We Believe In Prayer

F. W. Sweney

St. Paul, Minnesota

EARLY in life, I learned that through prayer I could receive divine help for the performance of even the smallest affairs of daily life. Later, I learned through Christian Endeavor something of the real blessings which come from prayer, or communion with God, and that it was not worth while to engage in any line of activity which could not be made the subject of prayer.

I believe in prayer because I have had definite answers to prayer on the football field, on the tennis court, and in business affairs, as well as in matters which pertain more definitely to the spiritual things of life, and because it is the best means of communing with my heavenly Father and learning His will for me. It prevents me from making many mistakes, it gives me courage to attempt the hard things of life, and it makes me realize more clearly that "all things work together for good to those that love God."

We Believe In Prayer

IMRE SZABO
Budapest

IF I could not pray, my whole spiritual life would die. I see the symptoms of dying at once when I give up regular praying. Why do I pray? Alas! mostly in order that God might take me, poor myself into his favor. I pray for all work in which I am working, and for all workers with whom I am working.

What methods of prayer did I find the most fruitful for myself? When I get up early in the morning at sunrise, go out to the open air, read a passage of the Bible. In the room I can pray the best in kneeling position. I am unable to pray lying in bed, because I feel the presence of God and such a position before God would be irreverence on my part.

How does prayer become the greatest power in my life? In prayer I get inspiration and I must obey it. My subconscious world becomes filled with holy feelings which feed me. In prayer I find guidance for my life. In prayer I receive energy supply for my physical and mental life.

We Believe In Prayer

ALVA W. TAYLOR

Vanderbilt University

IF PRAYER means the direct interposition of Providence to favor us in material things, I can no longer believe in it. If a loving God intervened to help in a direct material way, loving mothers would not have to bear the burdens of crippled children, and courageous servants of the common good would not bear the cross.

The genius of the model prayer taught by Jesus is something bigger than the *quid pro quo* of a holy trade. We are taught to ask for our daily bread when we know honest bread is earned with honest toil. We say "Thy Kingdom come" when we know its coming depends upon our own sacrificial service. It is a sense of dependence and a losing of self in the Great All that this model prayer makes the genius of all praying. Prayer does help to keep one humble and teachable—the first requisites of upright, Godly living; and it does

help us to forgive those who do us despite and to lend a hand to those in need—the unescapable requisites of upright social living.

I believe in prayer as the devoutest expression of the mystical in religion and as a means of keeping in tune with the infinite.

CHARLES F. THWING

Western Reserve University

THE interpretation which one gives to prayer depends largely on the interpretation which he gives to the nature of the universe. If the universe is interpreted as unknowing and unfeeling Force, prayer in the ordinary use of the term is unintelligible, unavailing. If, however, the universe be interpreted as personal, if it is understood that behind, beneath, and in all phenomena is a divine personality knowing, feeling, loving, prayer be-

comes natural, normal, spontaneous, inevitable. Yet in both interpretations of the universe, prayer may stand for what I shall call communion: communion, thinking upon Ultimate Being and its revelations, and feeling with this Being, an appreciation of this Being according to one's power; and sympathy, too, with this Being in its essential nature and in its revelations. To me, believing that in and behind all appearances is a personality whom we call God, prayer becomes a thinking upon God, an appealing to God as best we are able, a feeling with God, a sympathy, indeed, with God himself. In God one finds the universal Fatherhood, the eternal Motherhood, the infinite Friendship in present and constant helpfulness.

Mysterious? Of course. Unfathomable? Assuredly. For what is or can be the understanding by the finite mind of the infinite? Yet is the mystery of the Godhead deeper than the mystery of gravitation, more complex than the mystery of the flower in the "crannied wall?"

If, moreover, comprehension is impossible, apprehension may not be. If we are unable to

clothe ourselves with the garment of the eternal and of the infinite, we can at least touch the hem of that garment. In such a touch there may be vision for our blindness, healing for our ills, strength for our weakness, comfort for our sorrows, hope for our despair, and peace for our distresses. It may yet be true as Romanes sang in the memorial poem which he wrote on Darwin:

> "So let it be that, come what may,
> The very tomb which holds my dust
> Shall bear the message, 'Though He slay
> Me, yet in Him shall be my trust'."

AGNES L. TIERNEY

Germantown, Pennsylvania

THE laws of spirit are as yet but dimly understood. There are times when the entire being reaches out to God, not with a request,

but with a wordless yearning for His Light and Truth, His Guidance, Understanding and Love. This attitude of the soul forms a channel for the inrush of spiritual powers which bring refreshing streams of new life and vitality to the parched nature.

Prayer is a source of insight into the part we must take in the fulfilment of our own prayer. Millions of parents in enemy and allied countries prayed and agonized alike during the great war that their loved ones might come through the fight unhurt.

If all who prayed for their loved ones' safety had entreated that they themselves might be instruments in the work of diffusing the spirit of goodwill and forgiveness, and the casting out of the demon of fear, the war could not have continued and the prayer of millions would have been answered by removing the causes of death and destruction. When we pray for peace we must ourselves promote peace. When we pray for our enemies we must do all in our power to make them our friends.

We Believe In Prayer

JOHN J. TIGERT
University of Florida

PRAYER is the solitary vehicle of communication from man to God, the spiritual channel from the finite and the natural to the Infinite and Super-natural. Without faith in an eternal, omnipotent, beneficent Being no one but a hypocrite would pray; and without continuous thanksgiving, praise and supplication thru prayer, no man could be expected to retain faith in God. This is why I believe in prayer.

As a boy, like many others of the last generation, my mother taught me to pray on my knees. Though the particular mode of prayer may be immaterial, yet the spiritual essence of suppliant dependence upon the Deity may be best invoked by reverent attitudes, such as kneeling or bowing. Without the element of reverence, prayer would be a mere mockery.

I doubt whether the Deity interrupts the course of natural events in answer to specific requests in prayer, as many believe; but undoubtedly, there are Divinely inspired acts in

the lives of all who have faith in God and who worship Him in honest and earnest prayer. Certainly, all who pray are strengthened in their faith, reverence, and religious devotion by this process.

S. P. Y. Surendranath Voegeli-Arya

Madras University, India

THERE was a time when I believed that prayer was a rich song of adulation and praise to tickle the vanity of God who sits on high on His Throne in Heaven surrounded by many cherubim and seraphim. And in return I expected from Him, many gifts.

Then again I thought that prayer was a deep and profound attachment to God—an intense contemplative life. During this stage of my life, all that interested me was God. I thought of Him and Him only, always and everywhere. I sang aloud of His Glory and

Greatness, mediated on His goodness, Beauty and Sweetness. I got myself hypnotized and swooned. The only Reality was He—all else was illusion.

Then again, another conception of prayer dawned on me. According to this conception I felt that I must aspire to become pure and saintly as God Himself is. The result of this was that I developed a passion for spiritual conceit and arrogance. I divided people into sinful and sinless, and I placed myself among the sinless. Very soon I became an untouchable by asking the sin-smitten world to keep itself away from me.

But when I left my sanctuary and came out into the street, when I left my pulpit and took my stand in the public place, when I left the company of the rich, the powerful and the learned and took my seat among the outcast and hard-working laborers, among the poor and despised, the old idea of prayer—which my dear mother lived in her life when she was here in the midst of her children, and which my darling wife is teaching me every hour,

through her devotion to the sick and infirm who throng to her for their relief—has taken possession of me. I have come to believe that prayer is devotion to God through service to mankind.

There is no God higher than One who has made the human mind His highest habitation; no temple more magnificent than the devout heart of man; no prayer is much dearer to Him than His devotee's kind thoughts, words and deeds to His neighbor. In short—Service is Prayer and Prayer is Service.

THEODORE K. VOGLER

Whitman College Church

IT IS my belief that this is a Moral Universe. Then, there are invisible forces in the world which are working constantly to lift humanity and great Unseen Powers ever seeking to make us better than we are.

Prayer becomes the holy art of opening our

lives to these spiritual forces until we are conscious of the life of God within our souls.

So prayer increases our sensitiveness to the needs of our fellow men. It renews our love and freshens our sympathy. In times of great mental conflict, through prayer we restore poise and sanity, and charge ourselves with wisdom and power. Prayer brings an ever-deepening sense of the worth of spiritual things, a God-consciousness.

I believe in the practice of prayer at stated times, private and public, and especially with the family. But we may think of prayer in a higher sense, as being that time and place whenever and wherever the thoughts of man go feeling after God. So in that noble hymn "St. Andrew of Crete" we hear Christian answer boldly,

"While I breathe I pray."

That, perhaps, is the greatest of spiritual achievements to be so aware of spiritual realities that every act, deed and breath of our being is a prayer.

BROKEN STAIRS

By Robert Whitaker

I CANNOT count it faith's eclipse,
Though some may deem it so,
That prayer comes slower to my lips
Than in the long ago.

No more I agonize with God
Since I have learned God's love;
No more I grovel in the sod
With Wisdom throned above.

I dare not urge my dearest wish
Against His dearer will;
How shall I fear for bread and fish
The stone and serpent still?

Sometimes I overflow with praise
As birds with summer song;
The poor applause of formal phrase
Is frozen on my tongue.

And though the passing mood may dim
The brightness of his face,
My days and nights are all with Him
Beyond all time and place.

We Believe In Prayer

Let me not scorn the broken stairs
That brought my feet thus far,
While on the wings of wordless prayers
I soar from star to star.

HENRY NELSON WIEMAN
University of Chicago

THE following method of prayer I have found most helpful, practiced before retiring at night or soon after rising in the morning.

1. *Relax.* Rest upon God. Allow the petty interests, prejudices and passions of the hour to fall away as you are lifted and sustained.

2. *Aspiration.* Open the mind to the vast unexplored possibilities for good which may be found on the highest way of life.

3. *Face the big problem.* Everyone who is living earnestly has some perplexing problem. View it squarely, try to see through it and get it in right perspective. Wait thus before it. Some illuminating suggestion may come.

4. *Self-examination.* Search your habits, mental attitudes, past experiences to see what change should be made in yourself. Never stop with the evil but ascertain what good corrective habit or mental attitude you need.

5. *Statement of need.* State in accurate, affirmative language this required habit or mental attitude.

6. *Repetition.* Repeat several times this statement of the new habit or mental attitude that is required, the while resting upon the sustaining might of God.

Z. F. Willis

National Council, Y. M. C. A., London

I BELIEVE in prayer because Life and the Universe would be meaningless without faith in, and knowledge of, the active impenetration of both by a personal God with whom man may in many ways, and especially through

Jesus Christ, establish a relationship more intimate because more loving and understanding than even the closest human relationship.

I believe in prayer because Jesus believed in it and lived a life of constant prayer and taught us to pray. Just as Life and the Universe would be meaningless for me apart from the assumption that God is, and that God can and does intervene in the small and great issues of our lives, so the Jesus of History would become a clumsy myth, or a self-deceived fanatic, if primary place is not to be given in his life to the fact and reality of prayer.

But most of all I believe in prayer through experience of the Living Christ. Hopelessly inadequate, and incomplete, and unworthy as that experience has been, through it one has come to find in prayer not the ultimate achievement of mere subjectivity but an apprehension, dim and intermittent but none the less unmistakably real and convincing, that those who seek may find a comradeship and a resource of strength and power which passes understanding and compels belief that God answers

prayer. There is no single method, for most of all prayer is an attitude finding expression in every aspect of life.

STEPHEN S. WISE

Free Synagogue, New York

THE underlying assumption of prayer is not that things may be had for the asking, but that there are levels of life which cannot be reached save through superhuman communion. Prayer reaches a high stage when it is recognized that prayer must never be directed against another, or against another people, nor even for things for self or others, but solely for the inmost life of self, or the inmost life of another.

Who will presume to speak of futility in the realm of the spirit, who will say that aspiration is unavailing because it seems to be what the world calls futile? How can prayer be

futile if through prayer one pour one's self—as is possible in no other way—into the life of another, if one reach out into the life of all? Prayer might almost be defined as the mingling of the stream of the life of the individual with the seas of infinite life,—but the stream of the soul is not lost or spent, but regained and enriched through commingling with the tides of life, infinite and eternal.

Prayer will always remain disappointing if prayer be interpreted as if there were some celestial bargain-counter over which things must be given in answer to the soul's trafficking. If we cannot endure the absence of disinterestedness in human relationships, shall we not loathe it in the higher relationships of life, the relation of the human spirit to the divine spirit, or shall we make that relationship one of give and take?

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him"—this is prayer, for it is love supreme, it is trust sublime. Is not his soul most truly served who, whether his petition be granted or denied, flings himself into the unknown with

a song in his heart touching his fate? "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Prayer is not the only possible form of coöperation on the part of the human with the divine, and when prayer becomes a substitute for every other manner of aspiring coöperation with the divine purpose, then it becomes nothing more than utilitarian and base trafficking. Prayer must in truth be nothing more than the will to coöperate with the Eternal Purpose become articulate.

Prayer is not proof of the soul's dependence, but a token of the soul's freedom. If prayer were merely the soul's asking, then prayer were dependence; but prayer is giving, hence token of the soul's freedom. Prayer is giving in the quest of that which is being; prayer is even more than the communion of the soul on the highest levels of life, for it is the affirmation of the soul's relation to infinite power, everlasting wisdom, illimitable love.

I pray, not that I may have but that I may be; I pray not that God may give me, but that I may give myself to God. Nor shall I cease

to pray when God withholds from me, for from me God may not withhold the infinite and eternal gift of Himself. Prayer is the joy, high and unutterable, of the soul's outreaching unto Him who is the soul of souls!

MARY E. WOOLLEY

Mount Holyoke College

A BELIEF in prayer seems to me to be inevitable if one believes in God. And a belief in God is inevitable unless there is a frank denial of all except the material in life.

Y. T. WU

Shanghai, China

THERE was a time when I questioned the reasonableness of prayer. If God is a God of law and not of caprice, how could my personal

supplications affect the universal reign of law? This difficulty carried with it a host of other problems which are more or less familiar to us. Whenever I tried to pray, this doubt crept into the centre of my being and made the act look childish, superstitious and altogether unnecessary.

This state of things, however, could not persist. In spite of the revolt of my reason, my heart dictated a different course. I was from time to time irresistibly brought to my knees. And when I followed the heart, even the heart seemed to have a reason of its own. I was like a helpless child in the bosom of a loving Father. I could not help telling him my desires, my hopes, my joys and my sorrows. I do not know whether they are right or wrong, but I am confident that if they are wrong, I would be told so. And I realized that God has no need to change any law in order to answer my prayers. God can use my heart, my head, my hands and my feet to coöperate with the reign of law and perform human miracles. Some day we may be able to give a complete

description of the psychological processes involved in the act of prayer, but that will not take away its value and its beauty. God reigns in psychology as well as in science.

Prayer means power and peace, which is its distinct religious quality. There is always a residue that escapes explanation. If we suppose we have known all the mysteries of the universe, we are foolish.

Petition is still an important element in my own prayers, but more and more I feel that the highest form of prayer is a worship communion with God seeking quietly to know his will and to do it.

ROY O. WYLAND

Educational Director, National Boy Scouts

I BELIEVE in prayer.

I pray to God as the Father of my soul who alone gives meaning to the mystery of life.

I feel responsible for the manner of life I

live and I feel inadequate for the mastery of the living forces which bear me on.

Therefore, I cannot help praying. It is my *supreme privilege* in a *spiritual world*. Through prayer, I have fellowship with God and am assured that the great unknown is ruled by a Father's love which embraces me and sustains me in the good life.

I believe in prayer.

WHAT PRAYER MEANS TO ME

By Sophia Zernova

Orthodox Russian Church

PRAYER is in the first place a humble adoration of God, together with love and veneration. Prayer can be accompanied by a feeling of thankfulness, appeal for help or amazement of the boundless grandeur, glory and mercy of God, especially when we recollect the great

mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God and the redeeming suffering He went through.

A Christian is not a solitary being—he is a member of Christ's Church and therefore the necessity of prayer in common becomes evident. "Where two or three are gathered in My Name, I am amongst them." Common prayer is the union of many souls in one transport towards God; it is the fraternal union in love and in this consists its advantage as compared with personal prayer: "Many believers had one heart and one soul."

Prayer in common can take place anywhere, but usually prayer takes place in church, where it becomes general, as here is presented the bloodless offering. The whole Church—those who live on earth, the saints in heaven and the holy angels, unite around the Host.

The whole atmosphere of a church, the numerous images of Saints, the celebration of divine service and singing of hymns, carries us into the region of the ecumenical Church, on earth and in heaven and, therefore, the Church is called the terrestrial heaven: "Standing in

the Church of your glory we believe we are standing in heaven" can be quoted from one of the church prayers.

The faithful help one another through their prayers. Owing to the fact that there is no barrier between earth and heaven those who are on earth and those in heaven can give each other mutual help through their prayers. The Virgin Mary, the angels and all the Saints pray for those living on earth who ask for their prayerful help and who, in turn, pray for their dead. Thus arises a continuous circle of prayerful reciprocal assistance. The whole Church, in all its conjunction, sends up to God one united prayer of love. And each member of the church, whether he is on earth or in heaven, participates in this general prayer of love and occupies his place. All the members of the church help each other accomplish their salvation of which God is the source and distributor.

That is what I, as an Orthodox, see in Prayer.

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